THE GENESIS OF THE CUMBERLAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

JOHN V. STEPHENS

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BY

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Author of The Causes Leading to the Organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, The Cumberland Presbyterian Digest, Elect Infants, or Infant Salvation in the Westminster Symbols, The Presbyterian Churches, Unions and Divisions, Presbyterian Government, The Founding of The Lane Seminary, The Founding of the Theological School in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Etc.

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A PERSONAL WORD

"The Genesis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church" never has been adequately set forth. This treatise is based on official records and other reliable sources, following the Genesis, chronologically, from start to finish. As far as possible, authorities have been permitted to speak in their own words, thus enabling the reader to draw his own conclusions, rather than depend alone on those of the author.

Some of the source-materials are very rare. The "History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church," by the Rev. James Smith, published in 1835, is out of print. It is indispensable to a clear understanding of the subject. In a measure, the same may be said of the "History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky," by the Rev. Dr. Robert Davidson, issued in 1847. It, too, is out of print. The founders of the Church sent a "Letter" to the General Assembly in 1807, issued "The Circular Letter" in 1810, and published "The Brief View of Doctrines and Discipline" in "Buck's Theological Dictionary" (out of print), in 1814. These three documents are lengthy, a bit tedious reading, but very necessary for a complete understanding of the founders' version of their case.

The Minutes of the General Assembly for the years 1803, 1804, 1807, 1808, and 1809 supply information on questions coming before that body. I am indebted to William Warren Sweet for excerpts from his excellent book, noted in the Bibliography. These extracts are taken from the Minutes of the Presbyteries of Transylvania and Cumberland and the Synod of Kentucky. The excerpts from these various church-court records enable the reader to follow the subject step by step down to 1809. "The Circular Letter," "The Brief View of Doctrines and Discipline," and the Minutes of the Independent Presbytery of Cumberland and the Synod of Cum-

berland detail subsequent steps. Titles of other rare source-materials may be found in the Bibliography.

For fifteen years (1894-1909) I occupied the Chair of History in the Theological School of Cumberland University (known as the Lebanon Theological Seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church), Lebanon, Tennessee. This School was discontinued in 1909. The same year, the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of the South was founded, and for the years 1909-10 was located in Lebanon. I was Chairman of its Faculty. In 1910 this Seminary was affiliated with The Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio. I was connected with the Lane Faculty for twenty-two years (1910-32), when Lane, after rounding out one hundred years of service, was affiliated with the Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Chicago.

During my residence of sixteen years in Lebanon, I had access to the Library of Cumberland University, rich in materials bearing on the subject in hand. These included files of early church papers, magazines, and other publications, and personal letters relating to the case. During these years I published The Causes Leading to the Organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, The Cumberland Presbyterian Digest, and Elect Infants, or Infant Salvation in the Westminster Symbols. In my research for information in the preparation of these books, I gathered materials for this book. Later research enriched the source-materials on which I have drawn in writing this book.

Now, in memory of my boyhood Church, the Church of which I was a member long before its Reunion with the Mother Church, in 1906, a Reunion which I heartily approve, I am happy to reduce to permanent form the results of my labors on "The Genesis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church," in the hope that this little volume may make some contribution to a clearer understanding of this important historical question.

JOHN VANT STEPHENS

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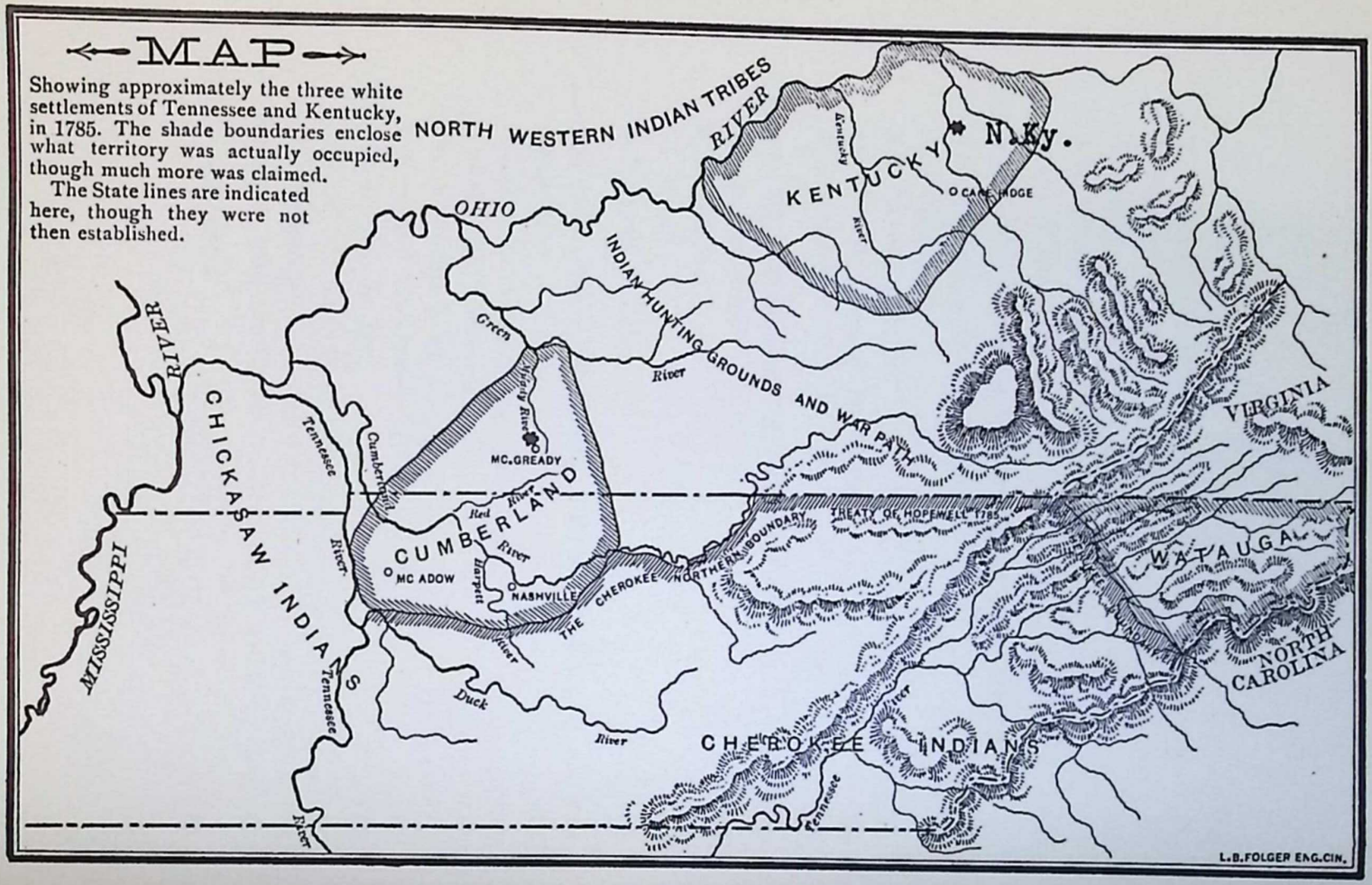
MAP

Showing approximately the three white settlements of Tennessee and Kentucky, in 1785. The shade boundaries enclose what territory was actually occupied, though much more was claimed.

The State lines are indicated here, though they were not then established.



CHAPTER I

ANTECEDENTS

In the latter part of the eighteenth century there were three white settlements, or countries as they were sometimes called, west of the mountains, namely, the Watauga, located in what is now known as East Tennessee; the Kentucky (the dark and bloody ground), located in what is now the central part of that state; and the Cumberland, located in what is now known as Middle Tennessee, reaching up to the Green River in Kentucky.* This upper part is sometimes referred to as the Green River settlement. These three "countries" took their names from the rivers on which they were located. In "The Genesis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church" special interest attaches to "The Cumberland Country," which includes, of course, the Green River settlement, in which the revival, out of which the Church originated, began.

The Name Cumberland

From whence was the name "Cumberland" derived? William Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, third son of George II, was in command of the English army at the battle of Culloden, in 1746. The victory he achieved was so important and decisive that England was wild with joy. The Duke's fame soon reached the colonies in America. In 1748, a party left Virginia on an exploration tour. On reaching a group of mountains, in honor of the Duke of Cumberland, they were named "Cumberland Mountains." Passing through a gap to the west, it was called "Cumberland Gap." Beyond, high up in the mountains, they discovered a beautiful little stream. This

* See map on opposite page.

was christened "Cumberland River." Later a part of the territory through which it flowed, including the Green River section, was known as the "Cumberland Country."

Early Settlements

James Robertson, coming from Virginia, explored the Watauga Country, and for a time was settled on the Watauga River, with sixteen families he led there. He defeated an attack by the Cherokee Indians in 1777. In 1778, he explored the Cumberland Country. This exploration led to the settlement of the country. It was determined to migrate three hundred and eighty persons from the Watauga Country to the Cumberland Country. Of these one hundred and thirty were women and children. This migration was begun in the fall of 1779. The emigrants were divided into two groups. The women and children, under the guard of thirty men, commanded by John Donnelson, were sent by boats, going down the Holston River to the Tennessee River, then down the Tennessee to the Ohio River, then up the Ohio to the mouth of the Cumberland River, then up the Cumberland to their new home in the wilderness. More of this group anon.

The men, excepting those sent to guard the river group, under the leadership of Robertson himself, followed a trace which had been blazed by hunters, a distance of some five hundred miles, through the wilderness of Kentucky. This group left Watauga on November 1, 1779. It was the plan for these men to press on to the Bluff, where Nashville now stands, and make preparations to receive the women and children on their arrival, three months being allowed for their voyage. The men took with them their cattle, and their luggage on pack-horses.

They encountered troubles on which they had not reckoned. Deep snows in the mountains, earlier than usual, and excessive cold weather held them back. They did not reach their destination until Christmas day, 1779. The very

cold winter had frozen such thick ice on the Cumberland River that they were able to drive their cattle and pack-horses across the river on the ice. Buildings and a fort were erected near the Bluff. Members of the party seeking locations for their future homes spread for forty miles up and down the river, too far for safety, because of the Indians who were in an ugly mood, even though stockades, enclosing block-houses were built. Robertson discouraged their scattering after this fashion. Later they paid dearly for their lack of caution. They rushed preparations for the reception of the women and children. As time passed, later comers settled throughout the Cumberland Country.

The men waited for the arrival of their women and children. After three months, the time in which it was thought the voyage could be made, had passed they became concerned for their safety. As weeks passed their anxiety became intense. It was not until about the last of April that the survivors arrived. Thirty-three had died. Of those who arrived nine had been wounded. James R. Gilmore paints a graphic picture of the voyagers' experiences. He says: "The voyage had no parallel in history. Nearly two thousand miles they had journied, in frail boats, upon unknown and dangerous rivers, never before navigated by a white man. The country through which they passed was infested by hostile Indians, and their way had been over whirlpools and dangerous shoals thirty miles in extent, where for days they had to run the gantlet and been exposed to the fire of the whole nation of the Chickamaugas, the fiercest Indian tride on this continent. For more than a month they were unable to move because of the intense cold, one of their number was frozen to death on the passage. Of the other dead, one was burned by the Indians, and the rest fell by the rifle and tomahawk of the savages."

As might have been expected the frontier life of the early settlers in the Cumberland Country was one of privation and

hardship. The Rev. Dr. B. W. McDonnold describes their experiences: "The first generation of children were brought up without 'store goods.' There were no shoes. All the people, men and women, wore moccasins made of untanned hides. Dresses were made of thread spun from buffalo wool, and the lint of the wild nettle for the chain. . . . There were no stores, no mails, no good wagon roads, only blazed pathways. All the books or other luxuries they owned had been carried on pack-horses over the mountains, through the wilderness. Salt was worth sixteen dollars per bushel. Iron was equally dear." The price of nails prohibited their use. Shingles on buildings were made fast with wooden pins or weight poles. Trade, if carried on at all, was by pack-horses over the mountains or by flat boats to New Orleans.

There was constant peril from the Indians. Many settlers were killed. Some were scalped and left for dead, who lived to relate their hair-breadths escapes. Numerous Indian atrocities were recorded. Some persons were captured by the Indians and held in captivity. Colonel James Brown, in 1788, decided to remove from North Carolina to the Cumberland Country. He built a strong flat-boat and set out by the water route. His family consisted of his wife, five sons and four daughters. Five young men, going out as settlers, were with the family. Several negro servants were also along. They all fell victims to the fierce Chickamaugas. Colonel Brown, his older sons and the five young men were all killed. The wife, Joseph, a young boy, and the other children and the negroes, were taken into captivity. After a year Joseph made his escape, and later piloted a military party to the secret haunts of these Indians, among the mountains, and broke the power of the Chickamaugas, after which the settlers had peace. Joseph Brown later became a Cumberland Presbyterian minister. Dr. McDonnold states that "all the first generation of the Cumberland Presbyterian preachers had been in the Indian wars."

Lineal Succession

The General Synod of New York and Philadelphia, then the supreme judicatory in the Presbyterian Church, held its last meeting in May, 1788, when, "out of its own body," it established four subordinate Synods, namely, New York and New Jersey, Philadelphia, Virginia, and Carolina. In these four Synods there were 16 Presbyteries, 177 ministers, and, not counting the Presbytery of Transylvania, from which no report had been received, 419 congregations, of which 204 were vacant. Commissioners from these Presbyteries, agreeably to the appointment of the General Synod, met on May 21, 1789, and constituted the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, which ever since has met annually.

The Synod of Virginia was composed of the Presbyteries of Redstone, Hanover, Lexington and Transylvania. The latter was constituted May 22, 1786. Its first meeting was "at Danville, in the District of Kentucky," October 17, 1786. The Presbytery of Transylvania included "the district of Kentucky and the settlements on the Cumberland River." In 1799 the Presbytery of Transylvania was divided into three Presbyteries, namely, West Lexington, Washington and Transylvania, the latter still embracing "the district of Kentucky and the settlements on the Cumberland River." On October 14, 1802, these three Presbyteries were erected into the Synod of Kentucky. At the first meeting of the Synod, October 14, 1802, *"the lower portion"* of the Presbytery of Transylvania was striken off to constitute the Presbytery of Cumberland, which included the settlements on the Cumberland River, reaching up to, and including the Green River section in Kentucky. In 1806 the Presbytery of Cumberland was dissolved, and its territory again included in the Presbytery of Transylvania. In 1810 the Presbytery of Transylvania was divided into three Presbyteries, namely, Transylvania, Muhlenburg and West Tennessee. The same year the Independent

Presbytery of Cumberland was organized. It was out of this Presbytery that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had its origin.

The Rev. Dr. Robert Davidson states that the first Presbytery of Cumberland "was composed of the following ten ministers, divided into two parties, equally balanced, viz., James McGready, William McGee, William Hodge, John Rankin, Samuel McAdow, known as the Revival Party; Thomas B. Craighead, Tera Templin, John Bowman, Samuel Donnell, James Balch, called the Anti-Revival Party." Owing to differences growing out of the Great Revival of 1800, the Synod of Kentucky dissolved the Presbytery of Cumberland in 1806. The revival members of the dissolved Presbytery formed themselves into a Council, as they said, to "promote the interests of the Church" in their settlements, pending "an answer" of their grievances "from the Assembly." A large majority of the churches were in sympathy with the Council. It continued to function (but not as a Presbytery) for about four years, until there was no hope of favorable action by the Assembly, when on February 4, 1810, an Independent Presbytery, bearing the name of Cumberland, as noted above, was organized, with the hope of an ultimate union with the Mother Church. This subject will be treated in a later chapter.

Early Missions

Of the 419 congregations, most of them very small, reported in 1789, when the General Assembly was constituted, 204, almost one-half, were vacant. Many of these congregations were on the frontiers. Besides these vacancies there were numerous settlements without the gospel, so making large demands on the Church to reach these destitute people with the good news. At its first meeting, the "General Assembly took into consideration the sending of missionaries among the frontier settlements."

"*Resolved,* That each of the Synods be requested, and they are hereby requested to recommend to the General Assembly at their next meeting two members well qualified to be employed in missions among the frontier inhabitants, for the purpose of organizing churches, administering ordinances, ordaining elders, collecting information respecting the religious state of those parts; and proposing the best means of establishing a gospel ministry among the people. And, in order to provide means for defraying the necessary expenses that may attend such missions, it is strictly enjoined on the several Presbyteries to have collections made during the present year in all the congregations under their care, and forward, with all convenient speed." Encouraging responses were made to this appeal.

The General Assembly sent out from year to year, the Synods cooperating, scores of missionaries, their terms of service usually being about four months each. Their remuneration was fixed at thirty-three and one-third dollars per month. The missionaries were generally pastors. When pastors, the Assembly appointed other ministers to supply their pulpits, while they were away. The method was crude. The Church was feeling its way to a more permanent and thorough organization, being impelled by a genuine missionary spirit. In 1802 a forward step was taken in organization.

"*Resolved,* That a Committee be chosen annually by the General Assembly, to be denominated 'The Standing Committee on Missions,' that this Committee shall consist of seven members, of whom four shall be clergymen and three laymen: that a majority of this Committee shall be a quorum to do business; that it shall be the duty of this Committee to collect, during the recess of the Assembly, all the information in their power relative to the concerns of missionaries, to digest this information, and to report thereon at each meeting of the Assembly."

In 1794 the General Assembly sent "a Circular Addressed to the inhabitants visited by the missionaries," which in part read as follows:

"Dear friends and brethren:

"The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America have for some years viewed with concern the state of our frontier and other settlements of the union, who are destitute of the regular administration of the worship and ordinances of God: and desirous to do all in our power to extend the blessing of the gospel amongst you, we have given order to our several Presbyteries to raise collections annually from their respective congregations for the support of missionaries to be sent among you. Providence hath thus blessed our endeavors, and several of our brethren have, from time to time, cheerfully left their friends and connections for some months, in order to visit your settlements and publish to you the glad tidings of salvation.

"The accounts which, on their return, they have given us of their reception and success among you have frequently and greatly comforted us, and given us the pleasing hope that their labors and our wishes have not been in vain in the Lord. As our aim has not been to proselyte from other communions to our denomination, we have charged our missionaries to avoid all disputation, to abstain from unfriendly censures on other religious persuasions, and adhering strictly to the great doctrine of our holy religion which influence the heart and life in the ways of godliness to follow after the things that make for peace and general edification."

The foregoing excerpts from the records of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church have been given in order that an understanding may be had of conditions on the frontiers, and the heroic efforts on the part of the Church to meet the challenge which it faced. Delicate problems were handled in such ways that a large number of permanent congre-

gations were organized, so today the Church is strong on what were then the frontiers.

Environments

The long continued absence of the watch and discipline of the Church, the failure of religious training of the young, the effects of war, the cupidity of the people, French Infidelity, and dissensions among the Christian population have been assigned as causes of the moral conditions in the country. In addition to matters peculiar to a frontier country, the forerunners and fathers of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had to meet conditions that came near wrecking our civilization.

Let authorities on this subject picture the conditions in their own words. Referring to the country as a whole, the Rev. Dr. Leonard W. Bacon says: "The closing years of the eighteenth century show the lowest low-water mark of the lowest ebb-tide of spiritual life in the history of the American Church, the demoralization of Army life, the fury of political factions, the catch-penny materialistic morality of Franklin, the philosophic deism of men like Jefferson, and the popular ribaldry of Tom Paine, had wrought, together with other untoward influences, to bring about a condition of things which to the eye of little faith seemed almost desperate."

Dr. Davidson, speaking for Kentucky, and his statement as to moral conditions holds for the Cumberland Country, says that "an overwhelming tide of migration poured into the country, outstripping the means of grace, and fast receding from the influence of religion. In short, religion sank to a low ebb." Again: "By the close of the [eighteenth] century, a decided majority of the people were reputed to be infidels; and as infidelity is the prolific parent of vice, it is not surprising to find that the whole country was remarkable for vice and dissipation." Referring to Mr. Jefferson, Dr. Davidson

remarks that "it is related of him that as he was riding through his native state with a distinguished foreigner (Signor Mazzei), his companion expressed surprise at the dilapidated state of some of the churches they passed, and which had been suffered to fall into decay during the Revolutionary War, when the Tory rectors fled to the mother country. The reply which Mr. Jefferson made was characteristic: 'they are good enough,' said he, 'for a god that was born in a stable!' "

Charles W. Hoffman, since 1915 the distinguished Judge of the Juvenile Court and the Domestic Relations Court, in Cincinnati, Ohio, writes: "At the close of the Revolutionary War infidelity in France had reached its height. Voltaire had determined, in 1728, to destroy Christianity; the fruition of his teachings was such as to strengthen the belief that he would finally succeed. The services of LaFayette and the aid given the Republic by the government of France had engendered in the hearts of the American people a kindly feeling for that country; they were prepared to believe that whatever came from France was good. The wild gales of French skepticism sweeping with irresistible fury across the sea surged over the heights of the Alleghenies and engulfed the pioneers of the Northwest Territory and of Kentucky and Virginia. [True also of the Cumberland Country.] Thomas Jefferson was then in the zenith of his popularity. He had been some years in attendance at the court of Versailles, and it was the popular belief that the great Jefferson had adopted the infidelity of the French. Opinions, too, were prevalent that many statesmen and other eminent men had accepted the same views.

"To add to the general unbelief, as fuel to a fire already too great, Thomas Paine's 'Age of Reason' was published. The ability displayed by Paine as a writer in the days of the Revolution and his identification with the cause of freedom made his writings, in the judgment of many people, worthy of great consideration. With men so learned engaged in its behalf, infidelity occupied a strong vantage ground. The

early settlers in their battle with the forces of nature had little time to investigate these matters for themselves, and readily accepted the views of men so prominent in statesmanship, so eminent in intellect. Had they endeavored to ascertain the truth, it would probably have been found that Thomas Jefferson, although taciturn in respect to religious doctrine, was far from accepting the vagaries and errors of the skeptics. A critical examination of Paine's 'Age of Reason' would have convinced them that however sound his political doctrines might be, yet in religious matters he was clearly illogical, and his views manifestly erroneous. . . .

"It is futile to discuss what might have been the condition of the inhabitants of the West had they indulged in a season of serious thought and reflection. War has a demoralizing tendency, even though the strife be ever so just. This 'unhappy concomitant' was evidenced more in the new settlements than at any other place. . . . The result was that, under the combined influence of French Skepticism, the teachings of noted men, and the unwholesome environment incident to the new countries, a great proportion of the people of Kentucky and Ohio (the vicinity with which we are concerned) became pronounced infidel. Thomas Moffit, in a conversation with Dr. James Gallaher, author of the 'Western Sketch Book,' says: 'It was believed that at the commencement of the year 1800 at least one-half of the men and women were avowed disciples of Thomas Paine.' When this was told to Abraham McElroy, the venerable old man replied: 'Say not one-half: say nine-tenths, for thus it was in the region of Lebanon, Kentucky, where I resided, and I myself was among the number.' This period of spiritual desolation is vividly described in a letter to the *New York Magazine* by Rev. Gideon Blackburn: 'About the years '98 and '99 the darkness was thick like that in Egypt, a darkness which might be felt. The few pious in the land were ready to cry out, 'Has God forgotten to be gracious? Are his mercies clean gone? Will he be favorable no more?' " (The Story of a Country Church.)

It was in Logan County, Kentucky, that the Great Revival of 1800, in the Cumberland Country, began. Surely such an awakening was needed. The Rev. Peter Cartwright, in his autobiography, gives a distressing account of the moral situation in Logan County. He wrote: "Logan County, when my father moved to it, was called 'Rogues Harbor.' Here many refugees, from all parts of the Union, fled to escape justice or punishment; for although there was law, yet it could not be executed, and it was a desperate state of society. Murderers, horse thieves, highway robbers, and counterfeiters fled here till they combined and actually formed a majority. The honest and civil part of the citizens would prosecute these wretched banditti, but they would swear each other clear; and they really put all at defiance, and carried on such desperate violence and outrage that the honest part of the citizens seemed driven to the necessity of uniting and combining together, and taking the law into their own hands, under the name of Regulators. This was a very desperate state of things.

"Shortly after the Regulators had formed themselves into a society, and established their code of by-laws, on a court day at Russelville, the two bands met in town. Soon a quarrel commenced, and a general battle ensued between the Rogues and Regulators, and they fought with guns, pistols, dirks, knives, and clubs. Some were actually killed, many wounded; the Rogues proved victorious, kept the ground, and drove the Regulators out of town. The Regulators rallied again, hunted, killed, and lynched many of the Rogues, till several of them fled, and left for parts unknown. Many lives were lost on both sides, to the great scandal of civilized people. This is but a partial view of frontier life."

The situation in the country was so grave that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1798, was constrained to transmit to the membership of the Church a Pastoral Letter. Two excerpts from this letter indicate the

gravity of the outlook as seen by this representative religious body. The Assembly was moved by what it regarded as an "Extraordinary Situation of the World." In view of this situation the Assembly said: "When formidable innovations and convulsions in Europe threaten destruction to morals and religion; when scenes of devastation and bloodshed, unexampled in the history of modern nations, have convulsed the world; and when our own country is threatened with similar calamities, insensibility in us would be stupidity; silence would be criminal. . . .

"We perceive," the Letter continues, "with pain and fearful apprehension, a general dereliction of religious principle and practice amongst our fellow-citizens; a great departure from the faith and simple purity of manners for which our fathers were remarkable; a visible and prevailing impiety, and contempt for the laws and institutions of religion, and an abounding infidelity which, in many instances, tends to atheism itself. . . . The profligacy and corruption of the public morals have advanced with a progress proportioned to our declension in religion. Profaneness, pride, luxury, injustice, intemperance, lewdness, and every species of debauchery and loose indulgence abound." And by the way, this vivid description of world conditions in 1798 applies with awakening accuracy to-day.

Chapter II

RELIGIOUS REVIVALS

Our nation has been moved from time to time by great swells of impassioned religious feelings. Such occasions have not been casual and meaningless, but have been intimately connected with the most important steps of our national progress. Mr. W. T. Stead, noted English journalist, who went down with the Titanic, April 12, 1912, said that "revivalism" was "the first and most persistent religious movement in America." He added that "it is easy to sneer at revivalism, but it has been the means by which hundreds and thousands of men and women found their way to a higher and purer life."

Bishop Warren A. Candler concurs with Mr. Stead. It is his opinion that "revivalism is the characteristic way of building up the Church—a way that began among the colonists and their fathers before they came to America, and which since the Great Awakening has continued with increasing power to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness." "It is," he continues, "essentially a preaching type; its chief reliance is the gospel 'preached with the Holy Ghost sent down.' It expects supernatural results from the Word, and it is not disappointed. It has produced the highest type of civilization and the purest form of Christianity."

There have been four great eras of general revivals in the history of the American Churches, each of which has been characterized by certain features, each of which has favorably impressed American civilization. These are the Great Awakening of 1740, the Great Revival of 1800, the Awakening of 1857-8, and the Moody-Sankey Revival of 1870 onward. Other

subordinate revivals may be classified under one of these four eras.

These seasons of general revival have produced results. That of 1740 discouraged the idea of a State Church. The Presbyterians and Baptists led the movement for religious liberty. Political liberty is closely related to religious liberty. When the time came to secure national independence, Presbyterians were among the leaders, as well as among those of subordinate rank, in achieving that liberty. Presbyterians were prominent in the organization of the government.

The Great Revival of 1800 came at a critical period in the history of the republic. Infidelity was increasing on every hand. It looked as though Christianity would be overthrown. But the revival came, infidelity was put to flight, and the country was saved. This revival gave home missions a fresh impetus, this was especially true in Tennessee and Kentucky. It was under the influence of this revival that foreign missions were begun. Several colleges came into being, and the spiritual life of colleges was deepened. The Churches began to erect theological seminaries in which to train the gospel ministry, seventeen being founded soon after the revival. Following the revival several religious publications made their appearance. In 1816 the *Boston Recorder,* the first religious weekly in the world, was established. Others followed rapidly until 1830, when nearly all the leading religious denominations had one or more weekly publications. In 1814 the American Tract Society was founded, and 1816 the American Bible Society was organized.

The Rev. Dr. Frank G. Beardsley says: "In view of the remarkable results which followed the Awakening of 1800, its salutary and long continued influence upon the religious life of the American Republic, the wide scope of territory covered and the numbers which were reached by its quickening power, this revival was fully as remarkable as any which

has ever refreshed the life of the Churches on the American continent."

The Great Revival of 1800

The experiences growing out of the Great Awakening of 1740 led the Presbyterian Church to guard against the excesses of emotionalism and censoriousness that marked this revival. The Rev. George Whitfield, the most popular leader in the movement, depended too much on "impulses and impression." The Rev. Gilbert Tennent, another prominent leader, declared that "many ministers of the gospel were unconverted men." Naturally in the Great Revival of 1800, the Church wisely desired to guard against the excesses that were so prominent in the previous revival. The Church was guided by the principle later announced by that great preacher, the Rev. Frederick Robertson, in which he stated that "excitement has its uses, impression its value. . . . But excitement and impressions are not religion."

Attitude of the Church?

What was the attitude of the Presbyterian Church toward the Great Revival of 1800? The Minutes of the General Assembly for the year 1803 answer this question, as follows: "The Assembly heard, at more than usual length, and with more than common satisfaction, the accounts received from their members, of the state of religion, within the bounds of the Presbyterian Church. Since an inqury of this nature has become a part of the annual business of the Assembly, it may be confidently asserted that no result was ever presented to our body so favorable and so gratifying to the friends of truth and piety."

The record continues: "In many of the southern and western Presbyteries [this includes Cumberland] revivals more extensive, and of a more extraordinary nature have

taken place. While many, within the bounds of those Presbyteries, have been, as is hoped, effectually called, without any exercises other than those which have generally attended the progress of vital piety; there have been multitudes of instances, in which *great bodily agitation,* and other circumstances, out of the usual course of religious exercises, have attended the work. As these extraordinary appearances have been before announced by the Assembly and as the knowledge of them is generally diffused throughout the American Churches, it is not judged necessary to enter into minute details on the subject. The Assembly would only observe, that although they forbear to express any opinion, as to the origin and nature of some of those circumstances, which have attended the southern and western revivals; and which have attracted so much of the attention of the religious world; yet they are constrained to acknowledge with thankfulness, that the last year, while it presented a continuance, and great extension of this extraordinary work, furnished also increasing evidence, that it is indeed the work of God, for which the friends of piety are bound to praise his holy name."

Following the record further: "The Assembly cannot believe that a dispensation, by means of which, the ignorant are enlightened, the vicious reclaimed, the erroneous made to acknowledge and obey the truth as it is in Jesus, the haughty infidel humbled and brought to bow penitent and believing before the cross of Christ, and the general aspect of society changed from dissoluteness and profanity to sobriety, and comparative purity, can be any other than a dispensation of the grace of God. And as there appears to be growing evidence that these are the happy fruits of the above mentioned remarkable work, the Assembly cannot hesitate to recognize in it the same divine power, which has, in every age, appeared in a greater or smaller degree, to build up Zion, to confound the wisdom of this world, and to show that when the Head of the Church will work none can hinder him.

"It would be easy for the Assembly to select some very remarkable instances of the triumphs of divine grace, which were exhibited before them in the course of the very interesting narratives presented in the free conversations:— Instances of the most malignant opposers of vital piety being convinced and reconciled;—of some learned, active, and conspicuous infidels becoming the signal movements of that grace which they despised;—and various circumstances which display the holy efficiency of the gospel. But forbearing to enter into minute details on this subject, they would only in general declare, that in the course of the last year, there is reason to believe that several thousands, within the bounds of the Church, have been brought to embrace the gospel of Christ; and large accessions of zeal and of strength, as well as of members, given to the people. . . . The Assembly consider the prospects of our Church in the frontier settlements, as more favourable than they have been at the date of any former report. They are gratified to hear from various quarters that new churches are rapidly forming; increasing in the number of their members. . . . On the whole, the Assembly cannot but declare with joy, and with the most cordial congratulations to the churches under their care, that the state and prospect of vital religion in our country are more favourable and encouraging than at any period within the last forty years."

The Supreme Judicatory of the Presbyterian Church, in 1804, bore further testimony about the Great Revival of 1800. "The Assembly have heard, with the highest satisfaction of the prevalance, and increasing influence of vital and practical godliness throughout the greater part of the Presbyteries which compose our body. Within those wide districts toward the south and west, from which the last Assembly heard, with so much pleasure, the glad tidings of the great salvation manifested there; the power of religion appears still to prevail, with little abatement. And although the subtlety of the ad-

versary of souls, and the influence of human frailty, some errors, extravagancies, and influences of reproachful behaviour have taken place, which the Assembly do sincerely regret, and most unequivocally disapprove and condemn; yet are happy to learn, and it is a sacred duty, which they owe to the churches, to announce that notwithstanding the malignity with which the enemies of religion have studied to misrepresent, and rejoice to exaggerate these undesirable events, they are chiefly confined to one district [Northern Kentucky?] of no great extent: and they are certainly very rare, considering the immense region through which this work prevailed, and the vast variety of characters who have been its subjects. The Assembly, moreover, have the unspeakable satisfaction to announce that the extraordinary influence of the divine Spirit have, since the last year been spread over new and very extensive countries, still further south and west."

These extensive quotations from the Minutes of the General Assembly for the years 1803 and 1804 indicate that the Presbyterian Church believed heartily in revivals as a means of conversion and in the building up of Christian character; that it recognized the good in the Great Revival of 1800, notwithstanding "some errors, extravagencies, and influences of reproachful behaviour," which the Assembly "unequivocally disapprove and condemn." Having considered the Great Revival of 1800 in general, and the attitude of the Presbyterian Church toward it, "The Genesis of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church" calls for special mention of the revival in the Cumberland Country and in Northern Kentucky.

In the Cumberland Country

The Cumberland Country included the Green River settlements in Kentucky, in which the revival originated. Two facts should be kept in mind in connection with the revival in the Cumberland Country. (1) The moral and religious conditions of the people, already considered. (2) The char-

acter of the Presbyterian preaching in that section. The Rev. Dr. E. H. Gillett states that the Rev. Thomas B. Craighead, the first settled pastor in Cumberland, near Nashville, Tennessee, "for fifteen years was never heard to speak 'in favor of the new birth, evangelical repentance, or saving faith:' and his course was scarcely exceptional. The ministers spoke of the *elect,* the *predestinated,* the *preordained,* but little of individual accountability or spiritual regeneration. A stiff technical theology or dry speculative orthodoxy left the heart and conscience unmoved. Members were received in[to] the churches without professing a change of heart or being aware of its necessity." Dr. Davidson speaks of the elder clergy in Kentucky as follows: "The most of them were not above mediocrity. . . . They were men of some information, and sound in the faith, but not deeply imbued with the spirit of the gospel. . . . The formal and set method to which they adhered, was better adapted to build up believers than to awaken the unconverted. . . . The approach of young persons to the communion was a rarity never expected. . . . As a natural consequence the young felt at ease, and gave themselves no concern about religion; and the Church, gaining no accessions, was in a fair way of becoming extinct through natural decrease." In another connection speaking of the ministry more in general, he says: "Had they all been men of marked ability, devotion and piety, and unblemished reputations, the salutary influence they might have exerted in moulding the character and institutions of the growing West would have been incalculable. Unhappily, with two or three shining exceptions, the majority were men of barely respectable talents, and a few hardly above mediocrity; and so far from being patterns of flaming zeal and apostolic devotion, a dull formality seems to have been their general characteristic." The Rev. Dr. William Sweet says: "The need for a vital ministry seemed to approach a famine."

Attention has been called to the fact that the Presbytery of Cumberland, when set off from the Presbytery of Transyl-

vania, in 1802, according to Dr. Davidson, had the names of ten ministers on its roll. Five of these, Thomas B. Craighead, John Bowman, James Balch, Tera Templin and Samuel Donnell were known as the Anti-Revival Party. The other five, James McGready, William McGee, Samuel McAdow, William Hodge and John Rankin were known as the Revival Party.

The Rev. James McGready was the leader of the Revival Party. He was born in North Carolina, in 1763, of Scotch-Irish descent. After becoming a candidate for the ministry, he removed to western Pennsylvania, where he was under the tuition of the Rev. Dr. John McMillan, later, the founder of Jefferson College. He served a congregation in Orange County, North Carolina. While in that state he became a noted revivalist. In 1796 he removed to Logan County, Kentucky, in the Green River section, the northern part of the Cumberland Country. He took charge of three small country churches, Gasper River, Red River, and Muddy River. These churches showed very little spirituality. Mr. McGready drew up a "Preamble and Covenant," which he and some of his people signed. They pledged themselves "to observe the third Saturday of each month, for one year, as a day of fasting and prayer, for the conversion of sinners in Logan County, and throughout the world," and "to spend one-half-hour every Saturday evening at the setting of the sun, and one-half hour every Sabbath morning, at the rising of the sun, in pleading with God to revive his work."

McGready to Dr. Coke

At the request of the Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke, prominent in the organization of Methodism in the United States, for an account of the revival, Mr. McGready complied with the request. His letter was published in 1803, in the Methodist Magazine, in London, and was republished in *The Cumberland Presbyterian,* Nashville, Tennessee, July 11, 1901. In

this letter Mr. McGready told his own story. In part it reads as follows:

"Reverend Sir:

"Agreeably to your request I shall attempt to give you a brief narrative; for if I were to descend to every minute particular, the subject would swell a letter into a volume. In the month of May, 1797, the work made its first appearance in the Gasper River congregation, in a church that was then under my charge in conjunction with two other infant congregations. A very solemn awakening took place during that summer, and about ten persons professed to experience the love of Jesus. In the fall a general coldness and stupidity took place, which continued during the summer and the following spring. This gloomy change seemed to strike alarm to the few Christians, through the several congregations, which induced them to set apart the last Saturday in each month for fasting and prayer.

"On the fourth Sabbath in July, at the administration of the sacrament in Gasper River Congregation, the Lord appeared in majesty and power. On Monday multitudes were solemnly awakened; some in almost every family throughout the congregation. The following week, the impressions were so deep, that little or no business was attended to.

"On the first Sabbath in September following, the sacrament was administered in Muddy River Church, another congregation under my charge. This was also a glorious time. The Lord poured out his Spirit in a very remarkable manner. About this time the work spread into many infant churches that were forming in this country, and many souls were savingly brought to Christ. Soon some prejudiced persons raised a vehement opposition, which involved our country in contentious disputations, and put a general stop to the work. In July, 1779, at a sacrament at Red River, one of my congregations, some sinners were awakened, and a few were converted. On Monday after public worship was over, before the people dispersed, the Lord graciously poured out his Spirit; many were remarkably blessed with the divine

presence, others were brought to their first works, and some sinners were awakened.

"In June, 1800, the most glorious time commenced that my eyes ever beheld. At the sacrament at Red River, on Monday after preaching, the people broke out in a general outcry over the whole assembly. About ten persons were hopefully converted. About a month after at Gasper River large multitudes attended. The work began on Sunday evening, and continued until Tuesday morning. Many persons from Sumner County, in the state of Tennessee, came out of curiosity, and the Lord graciously converted some of them. They carried home the divine flame, and spread it through the greater part of the Cumberland settlements.

"At this time we suppose about forty-five persons experienced a true conversion. At Muddy River, in August, the work began on Friday, and continued until Tuesday. The number converted we believe to be about fifty. At the Clay Lick, in October, the meeting was much interrupted by wetness of weather, but the Lord was present, and several persons experienced, I trust, living religion. At Little Muddy Creek, in November, the work began on Sunday evening and continued until Tuesday morning, when about twelve persons, we believe, were brought to Christ. The present summer is equally blessed, and the power is equally as great. At Drake's Creek, the first Sabbath in May, about twenty persons were converted. At Red River, in June, about twenty persons were converted. At Gasper River, last Sabbath, and during the occasion about forty persons were converted.

"In my narrative, I have confined myself to the sacramental times, as these were the most remarkable seasons. But very wonderful circumstances have occurred at private meetings, and praying societies, which I must pass over. Instances have been of a whole neighborhood meeting together, without any previous appointment, and joining in prayer, and the power of God descending among them. At one such accidental meeting nine persons out of sixteen professed to experience religion before they parted. At one society, the power of God came

among the people and they continued from Tuesday evening to Thursday evening, when ten persons were converted.

"The glorious work has disseminated a principle of love through the hearts of all Christians. Bigotry and prejudice have received a death wound; names, parties and divisions seem to subside totally. Presbyterians and Methodists love one another. They preach together, and commune together, and mutually rejoice to see the work of the Lord go on. I have confined my narrative entirely to Logan County; to the congregations under my care, and those under the care of Mr. Rankin.

"I remain your friend and brother in the gospel of Christ.

"JAMES MCGREADY"

As already noted, it was in the Green River section of the Cumberland Country that this great revival originated, in Mr. McGready's three small country churches, located in obscure settlements on a frontier civilization. From this small beginning it rapidly spread over the Cumberland Country. By 1810 there were over sixty settlements in which there were small Presbyterian churches or prospective churches. (By 1818 there were about eighty organized churches, and a number of groups awaiting organization.) These were all pleading for the ministrations of the Presbyterian Church. Large crowds from distant places attended the sacramental meetings in Mr. McGready's churches. In order to accommodate the people camp-meetings were appointed. *The first appointed camp-meeting* was held at Gasper River, July, 1800. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Clelland, a prominent Presbyterian minister, a contemporary familiar with the facts, says that camp-meetings originated in the Presbyterian Church from necessity, and that this necessity at the time was justified.

The Rev. James Smith states that "much opposition was manifested to the revival from its first commencement, and what is worthy of remark, its most violent opposers were avowed Deists and professors of religion. Some of the latter

no doubt were sincere Christians, but having never before witnessed such astonishing displays of the power of God, they attributed the whole to satanic influence, and treated the exercises as the result of enthusiasm and fanaticism—while others who were members of the visible Church but had never experienced the regenerating influnce of the Holy Spirit, thought that religion consisted simply in holding certain orthodox doctrines, and a moral life; these were offended at the zeal displayed by both ministers and people, who professed to have experienced a change of heart, to which they were strangers."

"Bodily Exercises"

There is no doubt that some of the opposition to the revival was due to the "Bodily Exercise," a matter which attracted wide attention, and about which much has been written. Among contributions on the subject an article of sixteen pages appeared in *The Biblical Repatory and Theological Review,* in 1834, by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Clelland, on "Bodily Affections Produced by Religious Excitement." Drs. Davidson and Gillett treat the subject, but make no clear allusion to the fact, as shown below, that the Rev. Mr. McGready and his followers repudiated the North Kentucky group as soon as they learned that this group, as Mr. Smith indicates, "encouraged the wildest delusions of the multitude, and propagated heresies of the most dangerous nature, which resulted in the formation of that body known by the name of Marshallites, or Stoneites, and sometimes as New Lights." The "bodily exercises" were in evidence in the Green River section as well as in the Northern Kentucky section, but without such wild fanaticism and no heresy as in the latter. Referring to the former, Mr. Smith writes such sentences as these: "They fell from their seats upon the floor, and there lay in agony, pleading for pardon." "They fell prostrate on the floor, and their cries filled the house." "The strange work

that had appeared in Mr. McGready's congregations." "A strange work in progress in Logan County had excited the curiosity of the multitudes in adjacent counties, and being encouraged by the invitations from Mr. McGready, a vast concourse of people flocked to the meetings, from the distance of twenty, thirty, fifty and even a hundred miles. In many instances, whole families went in their wagons, with provisions. . . . Instantly the divine flame spread through the whole multitude; many of the unconverted became so deeply affected that they fell powerless on the ground, and cried aloud for mercy."

Mr. Smith says that "the first that was known of the jerks among the churches in the Cumberland and Green River countries, was in the fall of 1803, at a meeting in Smith County [Tennessee], where several of the congregation were affected by them. Immediately afterwards, they appeared in Wilson County [Tennessee], and soon pervaded all congregations of every denomination in the country—all classes of society were affected by them, not only friends of the revival, but its most violent opposers, ministers and people, saints and sinners, men and women, learned and ignorant, strong and feeble, all felt the effects of this strange exercise. Sometimes at the close of a discourse hundreds were to be seen jerking at the same time. Persons were affected by it when traveling on the highway, or when at their usual occupations."

In Northern Kentucky

Facts have been perverted by confounding the McGready meetings in the Green River section, of the Cumberland Country, with the revival in Northern Kentucky. There were some striking similarities between the two, such as camp-meetings and emotionalism; but there were also vital differences, which writers have not adequately treated, and for the most part even have overlooked. The result is that many

people were for a long time misled, and possibly some are still not informed on the facts in the case. In whatever way a false report may gain circulation, it is practically impossible to overtake it and get it fully corrected. It was reported and believed by many that the Cumberland Presbyterians and the New Lights were very closely related, if, indeed, they were not one and the same.

This fact is well illustrated by two Presbyteries in the Presbyterian Church, one in Pennsylvania and the other in Ohio. The Rev. Jacob Lindley, a prominent minister in these states, says that he had heard the statement "often" that the "Cumberlands" and the "New Lights" "were one and the same," and believed it, until he investigated the subject for himself. In the Pennsylvania Presbytery, Dr. McDonnold states, on reliable authority, that a member on the floor of the Presbytery made a reference to the Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church when "the moderator stopped him, saying, 'they have no Confession of Faith, but denounce all such things.'" (The New Lights had no Confession of Faith, and "denounced all such things.") Not until a copy of the Confession of Faith was produced was the moderator convinced of his mistake. Attention then was called to the action of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1825, in which it was stated that the "administrations" of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church "are to be viewed in the same light with those of other denominations." It was denied that the Assembly ever had taken such action. It was necessary to produce a copy of the Assembly Minutes to determine the truth in the case. "All the members of the Ohio Presbytery," says Dr. McDonnold, "had the same false views about the identity of the Cumberland Presbyterians and New Lights."

The origin of the New Lights is an interesting story. But what has this story to do with the revival in Northern Kentucky? Northern Kentucky here means the northern part of

the original "Kentucky Country." It was about two hundred miles from the McGreary revivals in the Green River section of the northern part of the "Cumberland Country." These two sections were too far apart, in these early frontier days, for either one materially to affect the other in any appreciable degree. In the spring of 1801, the Rev. Barton W. Stone, pastor of the Cane Ridge Church, in Northern Kentucky, attended one of McGready's meetings. He returned, he says, "with ardent spirits." In August 1801, he held a meeting in his own church. Dr. Gillett states that "a Revolutionary officer, accustomed to estimate encampments computed it to amount to not less than twenty thousand souls. The number of communicants is variously stated at from eight hundred to eleven hundred. [Northern Kentucky was much more densely populated than the Green River section.]

"All who left us any account of the scene agree in confessing that language is inadequate to describe it. It was sublime, grand, awful. The noise was 'like the roar of Niagara. The vast sea of human beings was agitated as if by a storm.' The tide of emotion seemed to roll over them like tumultumous waves. Some times hundreds were swept down almost at once, 'like the trees of the forest under the blast of the wild tornado.'" Continuing, Dr. Gillett quotes from the autobiography of the Rev. J. R. Finley, a spectator, as follows: "I saw at least five hundred swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them; and immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the very heavens. My hair rose upon my head, my whole frame trembled, the blood ran cold in my veins, and I fled for the woods."

The Rev. B. B. Tyler says that "to this meeting many had come from Ohio and other distant parts. These returned home and diffused the same spirit in their respective neighborhoods. Similar results followed." On first hearing of the revival in Northern Kentucky, Mr. Smith states that "thanks-

giving was heard through the Green River and Cumberland Countries." Dr. Davidson names six respective neighborhoods in Kentucky and Ohio where meetings were held, in which he says that "the preaching was pungent, and the people violently agitated. Children of ten and twelve years were frequently prominent actors. The spectacle of persons falling down in a paroxysm of feeling, first exhibited at Gasper River Church, in August 1779, became so common as to receive a distinct title, and to be known as the *'Falling Exercise.'*"

Dr. Davidson names and describes the leaders of the unfolding New Light heresy. "Among the zealous advocates of the new measures in the upper part of Kentucky, Messrs. Houston, Stone, and Marshall, were prominent. These men had always inclined to a fervent and exciting style of preaching, and their peculiarities had gained them popularity, and reputation for extraordinary zeal. Houston was constitutionally of a warm and sanguine temperament; Marshall was a bold and stern enthusiast; Stone differed from both in a cooler sagacity, an appearance of tender feelings, and a bland, insinuating address; all well calculated to be leaders, as they equally loved influence and the stimulus of thronged assemblies. It is not wonderful therefore that, aided by enthusiasm of the times, they succeeded in stealing away the hearts of the people, ever captivated by great appearance of devotion." A further word: In the revival in Northern Kentucky, Dr. Davidson says that Stone "was the ringleader in the disorders." "In the Great Revival," he continues, "Mr. Stone was conspicuous. He embraced an early opportunity to promulgate his peculiar views, which he styled 'The True New Gospel,' and was foremost in encouraging the extravagances of the time. The falling exercise seems to have begun in Northern Kentucky, in his congregation at Cane Ridge." Mr. McNemar is represented as referring to persons in these exciting meetings as "praying, shouting, jerking, barking, or rolling, dreaming, prophesying, as through a glass, at the in-

finite glories of Mount Zion, just about ready to break open upon the world."

The New Lights ran a rapid course. Revs. Messrs. Barton W. Stone, Robert Marshall, Richard McNemar, John Thompson and John Dunlavy, in 1803, withdrew from the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church, and associated themselves together under the name of "The Springfield Presbytery." This group was known as New Lights, Stoneites or Marshallites. They maintained that all creeds and confessions ought to be rejected; that the Bible alone, without note or comment, should be the bond of Christian fellowship. It is said that the New Lights were represented by eight societies in Northern Kentucky and seven in Ohio, and others in regions more remote. After nine months "The Springfield Presbytery" issued a strange document, entitled "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," and dissolved the organization. Stone continued to drift until he at last joined the Disciples, better known at that time as Campbellites, where his name is now held in honor.

The New Lights Repudiated

It has been stated that there was rejoicing in the Green River and Cumberland settlements on the receipt of the first news of the revival in Northern Kentucky. But when its leaders and their methods became better known, they were completely repudiated by leaders and people of the revival in the whole of the Cumberland Country. Mr. Smith states that "it is well known that when Stone and his fellow-laborers embraced their absurd and heretical notions, and visited the bounds of the Cumberland Presbytery, the revival ministers discountenanced and opposed them, and in that opposition they were countenanced and supported by their people; whereas the opposers of the revival and the measures of its supporters flocked by scores to their standard. Therefore it is unjust in the extreme to attribute to the revival, or to the

conduct of those among whom it first appeared, those wild fanaticisms, and heresies, which for many years distracted the West." The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church state that "swarms of heretics and fanatics" from the upper counties of Kentucky gave them much perplexity, but they stood firm.

The Rev. Dr. F. R. Cossitt, President of Cumberland University, after a thorough investigation, says: "They [the New Lights] arose in upper Kentucky, only a few years after the commencement of the revival of 1800, flourished for a while, but finally have been absorbed by other sects. Certain Presbyterian writers and talkers have endeavored to confound the Cumberland Presbyterians with these people, and to lead the world to believe that the former have fallen into delusions similar to those of the latter. Nothing can be more untrue or unjust. The truth is, the New Lights nowhere met with sterner opposition, nor experienced a greater want of success in making proselytes to their abominable heresy, than in the bounds of the Cumberland Presbyterian operations. The pastors of churches and itinerants on their circuits made themselves masters of the subject in controversy, and prepared themselves manfully 'to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.'"

Doctors Bishop and Miller

Dr. Cossitt stated that "certain Presbyterian writers and talkers have endeavored to confuse the Cumberland Presbyterians with these people [the New Lights]." Cases in point: The Rev. Dr. Robert H. Bishop, Professor of History in the Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky, later the first President of Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, in 1824 published a "History of the Churches in the State of Kentucky," etc., etc., in which he purported to give the origin of the Cumberland Presbyterians, which he affirmed to be as follows:

"The years 1800 and 1801 were distinguished by an uncommon religious excitement among the Presbyterians of Kentucky. This excitement began in Logan County, and soon extended all over the state, and into neighboring states and territories. Besides increased attention to the usual and ordinary seasons and modes of worship, there were, during the summers of these years, large camp-meetings held, and four or five days and nights at a time were spent in almost incessant religious exercises. At these meetings hundreds, and in some cases thousands of people might have been seen and heard at one and the same time engaged in singing and prayer, and exhortation, and preaching, and leaping, and shouting, and disputing, and conversing. It was in meetings and exercises of this kind that the Cumberland Presbyterians had their origin."

In this book Dr. Bishop devotes a number of pages to the New Lights, but makes no allusion to the revival in Northern Kentucky out of which they originated, although they had their beginning in an adjoining county to the one in which he wrote. Here is an omission of a material fact. An accurate, dependable history includes a fair, lucid statement of all material facts, and a logical interpretation of the facts. The type of revival, or "religious excitement," as Dr. Bishop calls it, out of which he says "the Cumberland Presbyterians had their origin," is the precise type out of which the New Lights had the beginning of their origin in his own section of the state, and yet he makes no mention of it! His writings, as will be seen, misled Dr. Miller.

There was a vital difference between the leaders of the revival in the Green River settlement and those in Northern Kentucky. But unfortunately this fact was not generally understood throughout the Synod of Kentucky. In addition to the inaccurate impression conveyed by Dr. Bishop's writings, according to the Rev. Dr. E. B. Crisman, "Craighead [later deposed from the ministry], Bowman [later suspended from

the ministry], and others undertook by private correspondence to prejudice the minds of the distant members of Synod, by making them believe that the two works were the same. In this they partially succeeded." It will be remembered that Craighead and Bowman were two of the leading members of the Anti-Revival Party in the Presbytery of Cumberland from the time of its erection.

The Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller, Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Theological Seminary at Princeton, in the early part of 1833, published a series of sixteen Letters in *The Presbyterian,* which later in the same year were published in a book of 314 pages, under the title of "Letters to Presbyterians." Dr. Miller was favorable to revivals. He says: "I am a warm friend of 'protracted meetings.' " But he was opposed to "calling anxious sinners into the aisles, to be addressed and prayed for," or to request them "before the great congregation, to come forward from any part of the house, and occupy seats vacated for that purpose."

Referring by implication to the Revival Party in the Presbytery of Cumberland he says that "errors of the most serious kind were preached"; that "with very few exceptions, they [the ministers] all turned out grossly hetrodox and disorderly." Speaking of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church he says: "The body since known by the name of 'Cumberland Presbyterians,' now consists of a number of Presbyteries, professing to adopt the Presbyterian form of government, but avowedly embracing Arminian sentiments in theology. Another, but smaller portion, formed a new body, denominated 'Chrystians,' and sometimes 'New Lights,' or 'Stoneites' (from the name of their principal leader), and became a kind of enthusiastic, noisy Socinians. While the remainder, under the same lawless impulse, took a third course, and fell into all the fanatical absurdities of 'Shakerism.' " Dr. Miller here gives a description of the Northern Kentucky group, but ascribes it to the Green River group also. As he later acknowledged he "fell into several mistakes."

Besides *The Presbyterian,* this Letter dealing with the Cumberland Presbyterians appeared, in whole or in part, in *The New York Observer, The Boston Recorder, The Orthodox Presbyterian,* Belfast, Ireland, and "other papers east of the mountains." *The Revivalist,* the Cumberland Presbyterian paper, published in Nashville, Tennessee, was of the opinion that Dr. Miller "was led astray by the gross misrepresentations of such men as the Rev. Dr. [Joshua L.] Wilson of Cincinnati, and Dr. Bishop, both of whom have published to the world the most foul slanders on the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and have represented her doctrines and practices in the most odious light."

Dr. Miller was rebuked by *The New York Evangelist,* which referred to his Letter dealing with "the formation of the Cumberland Church," which "he exhibited in such a manner as to give a very unsatisfactory appearance to that Church, in respect to its origin and principles, and such as must necessarily be very painful to its ministers and members." *The Evangelist* continues: "For some years we have uniformly heard from agents of societies, and others in the West, that they found no more bold and devoted co-operators than the Cumberland Presbyterians. The Bible, Tract and Temperance Societies were much indebted to them. They have a respectable college at Princeton, Kentucky, and a paper at Nashville, which is ably and evangelically edited. In short, if we are to judge of a tree by its fruits, we suppose there is no equal body of professed believers in the Western States better entitled to the character of a branch of the Christian vine. Dr. Miller's disparaging Letter, therefore, has very naturally called forth a brief defense from Rev. Finis Ewing, which was published in *The Revivalist.*" The Cumberland Presbyterian Church at that time was twenty-three years of age, and had about thirty thousand members and adherents, as estimated by the editor of *The Revivalist.*

The Rev. Finis Ewing, one of the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, through *The Revivalist,* made a sharp reply, really sharper than was necessary, to Dr. Miller, June 19, 1833, in which he lists seven mistakes, which he alleges Dr. Miller had made. In response to Mr. Ewing's article, Dr. Miller said: "I thought myself warranted in making the statements which I did in one of my *Letters to Presbyterians.* If I have misrepresented any facts, or employed one word or censure more than was merited, no one can more sincerely regret the mistake than I shall when convinced of it. My confidence in Dr. Bishop led me to assume with entire assurance the truth of all his statements; and I am still persuaded that he is incapable of wilful misrepresentation." Then Dr. Miller announced his purpose to examine "anew circumstances attending the rise of the Cumberland Presbyterians." After his re-examination, in which he makes no mention of Dr. Bishop, he wrote to *The Revivalist:* "I feel a cordial pleasure in repairing an injury which certainly was not intended." He stated that his Letter of criticism had been written "hastily, chiefly from recollections, and with very little reference to documents." He admitted that he "fell into several mistakes, and indulged in modes of expression," which he regretted. He admitted that in his Letter justice had not been done to the Cumberland Presbyterians; and that they were in no way connected with the New Lights. He promised that if his *Letters to Presbyterians* reached a second edition he would "carefully correct" his Letter, bearing on the Cumberland Presbyterians. He mentioned a possible "union with our General Assembly," but added, "I have no expectation of living to see such a union, but I do not give up hope that those coming after me will witness it." (*The Revivalist* quoted in the *Theological Medium,* 1876.) Dr. Miller's hope of "union with our General Assembly" was realized in 1906. A number of candidates for the ministry in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church were students at Princeton. These boys seem to have made a good impression on Dr. Miller.

Emotionalism

The emotionalism accompanying the revival has been a subject of much discussion. At the time there were those who regarded it as an indication of divine approval, while there were others who ascribed it to satanic influence. Both groups were mistaken. Whatever the explanation may be for such emotionalism, one must take into account the background, the moral and religious condition of the country. Dr. Davidson sums up the situation as follows: "On the eve of the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the increase of ministers and churches, the prospect was sufficiently gloomy to appall both the Christian and the patriot, through the operation of the causes already enumerated. The population of the state advanced with incredible rapidity, and soon outstripped the supply of the means of grace. Worldly-mindedness, infidelity, and dissipation threatened to deluge the land, and sweep away all vestiges of piety and morality. The rising generation were growing up in almost universal ignorance of religious obligation. The elder church members were gradually dying off, and were replaced by no recruits from the ranks of the young. Except a little Goshen here and there, the shadow of the night was gathering over the land. At this juncture, when hope was ready to expire, an unlooked-for and an astonishing change suddenly took place. This was the GREAT REVIVAL OF 1800, so called from its wide extent and influence; and which after all necessary allowances for the disorders which deformed it, was beyond controversy, attended with signal benefits."

But how account for "the disorders which deformed" the revival? Dr. Davidson's explanation: "The theories which imply either deception or superhuman agency must be abandoned. The only correct and satisfactory solution is found in *the influence of the imagination on the nervous system.*"

Dr. Bacon pictures the population as "peculiarly susceptible of intense excitement, transplanted into a wild country, under little control either of conventionality or law, deeply ingrained from many generations with the religious senti-

ment, but broken loose from the control of it and living consciously in reckless disregard of the law of God, is suddenly aroused to a sense of its apostasy and wickedness. The people do not hear the word of God from Sabbath to Sabbath, or even from evening to evening, and take it home with them and ponder it amid the avocations of daily business; by the conditions, they are sequestered for days together in the wilderness for the exclusive contemplation of momentous truths pressed upon the mind with incessant and impassioned iteration, and they remain together, an agitated throng, not of men only, but of women and children. The student of psychology recognizes at once that here are present in an unusual combination the conditions not merely of ready propagation of influence by example and persuasion, but of those nervous, mental, or spiritual infections which make so important a figure in the world's history, civil, military, or religious. It is wholly in accord with human nature that the physical manifestations attendant on religious excitement in these circumstances should be of an intense and extravagant sort."

The Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley analyzes the emotionalism as follows: "The psychological key to the problem is that concentrated attention, accompanied by strong religious emotion, produces a powerful impression upon the nervous system, the result being an agitation of the nerves throughout the body, the effect of which differ according to the constitution of the subject. In one relief is found in floods of tears, in another in hysterical laughter, in a third by unconsciousness, in a fourth by a partial loss of muscular action, with marked effects upon the operation of the mind; in yet another complete catalepsy may be produced, every muscle becoming rigid and so remaining for hours, while no impression can be made by ordinary means upon either the senses or mind; in still another involuntary motions may be constantly made, lasting for hours together; while some temperaments can bear religious or any other kind of emotion without outward excitement and with no indication except an unusual calm-

ness. These differences of susceptibility are seen outside the sphere of religions, and even among members of the same family."

The Rev. Dr. Jesse Herrmann, Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., Lexington, Kentucky, in his recent publication, *James McChord—A Portrait,* referring to the Great Revival of 1800, writes: "During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Kentucky witnessed the most remarkable religious revival in American history. Its origin and significance have been discussed from every angle by many writers. The intense emotional hysteria produced physical and psychological reactions that stagger belief. But, as in all abnormal experiences, the fury finally spent itself and an enriched deposit of vital religion remained. When a deluge inundates the low lands the prospect is bewildering; but once the waters are again confined by the banks, the adjacent fields are found to be appreciably enriched. The 'Great Revival' shifted the center of the pioneers' thought from man to God, from the material to the spiritual, from the things as they are to the things as they ought to be. Long after this spiritual upheaval ministers continued to debate abstract theological questions, but the tide had turned; the demand became insistent that forthright religion must come to fruit in conduct that is ethical and character that is above reproach."

There were extravagancies. They were in evidence in various parts of the Cumberland and Green River settlements, but particularly so in Northern Kentucky. But the genuineness of the Great Revival of 1800 cannot be questioned, in view of the evidence at hand. Attention has been called to the testimony of the Rev. James McGready, and that of Dr. Davidson, in which he said, "it was beyond controversy, attended with signal benefits." The General Assembly sincerely regretted these extravagancies, and wisely disapproved them, nevertheless it recognized the genuineness of the revival. It is not necessary in this connection to quote the testimony of later historians on the subject.

Chapter III

"EXTRAORDINARY CASES"

Recapitulation: The Presbytery of Transylvania included "the district of Kentucky and the settlements on Cumberland River." In 1799 the Presbytery of Transylvania was divided into three Presbyteries, namely, West Lexington, Washington and Transylvania, the latter still embracing "the district of Kentucky and the settlements on Cumberland River." On October 14, 1802, these three Presbyteries were erected into the Synod of Kentucky. At its first meeting the Synod cut off "the lower portion" of the Presbytery of Transylvania and constituted it into the Presbytery of Cumberland, which included the settlements on the Cumberland River and on the Green River in Kentucky, all of these settlements being included in the Cumberland Country.

The new Presbytery, says Dr. Davidson, "was composed of the following ten ministers, divided into two parties, equally balanced, viz: James McGready, William Hodge, William McGee, John Rankin, Samuel McAdow, known as the Revival Party; Thomas B. Craighead, Tera Templin, John Bowman, Samuel Donnell, James Balch, called the Anti-Revival Party." Dr. Davidson overlooked the Rev. James Haw, who had been received into membership by the Presbytery of Transylvania, and who was located in "the lower portion," which was cut off to form the Presbytery of Cumberland, so his membership, by the action of the Synod of Kentucky, was in the Presbytery of Cumberland. However, little was heard of him in any way.

"These parties," says Dr. Davidson, "were distinctly marked, and held no intercourse with each other, except when thrown together at ecclesiastical meetings." Of the Anti-

Revival Party, Craighead was later deposed from the ministry; Bowman was later suspended from the ministry; and Balch, Mr. Smith sasy, "ridiculed the whole work of the revival, formed a considerable party and involved these young churches in disputation." Dr. McDonnold adds: he "went from house to house and from church to church, ridiculing the revival, and trying to embarrass the young converts." As already indicated, the revival began in the three small country churches under the pastoral care of the Rev. James McGready. It spread rapidly over the Cumberland Country. By 1804 there were over sixty neighborhoods in the Cumberland Country, in which there were small Presbyterian churches or small groups of professing Christians awaiting to be organized into churches. Urgent calls were constantly coming from these various small frontier neighborhoods for preaching and the administrations of the sacraments by the Presbyterian Church.

The harvest was plentious but the laborers were few. "The demands for preaching," says Dr. Davidson, "soon exceeded the ordained ministers to supply it, and it was judged expedient to have a few intelligent and zealous laymen selected, and licensed as catechists and traveling exhorters, in accordance with the usage of the Presbytery of Transylvania, from its origin." This suggestion was made by the Rev. David Rice, familiarly known as Father Rice, who was held in high esteem, and was recognized as the most influential minister in the Synod of Kentucky. The advice of Mr. Rice and "the usage of the Presbytery of Transylvania, from its origin," were in accord with the practice of the Church of Scotland. The Rev. W. M. Hetherington, in his History of the Church of Scotland, speaking of the classes of officers in the Church, says: "This latter class consists of the most pious persons, who, having received a common education, were able to read to their more ignorant neighbors, though not qualified for the ministry. When the readers were found to have discharged their duty well, and to have increased

their own knowledge, they were encouraged to add a few plain exhortations to the reading of the Scriptures; and then they were termed exhorters. If they still continued to improve, they might finally be admitted to the ministry."

Mr. Rice and the Assembly

Mr. Rice wrote a letter to the General Assembly about the critical situation on these frontiers. In reply, among other statements, the Assembly said: "We do not say that a liberal education is absolutely essential to a man's usefulness in the ministry of the gospel; but reason and experience both demonstrate its high importance and utility." After offering some "reflections," the reply continues: "Notwithstanding the preceding reflections, it is the opinion of this Assembly that where the field of labor is too extensive for the ordinary and regular ministry, certain assistants, like the helps or catechists of the primitive Church, may, under proper restrictions and limitations, be usefully employed in instructing the young in the principles of our holy religion; and conducting the praying and voluntary societies of private Christians. . . . In some parts of the Church their utility might be very great, while in others, they would prove not only useless, but dangerous. It must be left solely to the regular and established judicatories of the Church, according to the circumstances which may exist within their respective limits, to judge upon the subject. . . . They [certain assistants] are not to be considered as standing officers in the Church; but may be appointed, or removed, at the discretion of the Presbytery. But, if any, upon full experience, are found to possess uncommon talents; are diligent to acquire the requisite qualifications for preaching the gospel, and promise to be eminently useful in the Church, they may, in time, *purchase to themselves a good degree,* and be admitted according to regular course to the holy ministry. These things we leave to your prudence." (Minutes, 1804.)

In this letter to Mr. Rice, the Assembly points out dangers that may arise in the appointment of "certain assistants," but also emphasizes needs that may arise in some places calling for such appointments, under presbyterial guidance. The letter also indicates that some "assistants" may *"purchase to themselves a good degree,* and be admitted according to regular course to the holy ministry." "These things," the Assembly says to Mr. Rice, "we leave to your prudence." Mr. Rice's view about "assistants" is well known. It was he who recommended their appointment to the Presbytery of Transylvania. Some appointments made under his advice did *"purchase to themselves a good degree,"* and were admitted to the ministry. Why did the Synod of Kentucky fail to follow the advice of Mr. Rice, reinforced by the Assembly's letter? Had the Synod heeded the advice of Mr. Rice and the Assembly's letter there never would have been a Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Dr. Cossitt, President of Cumberland University, speaking of this letter, says: "This reply is plain and pertinent, such as might have been expected from the wisdom and piety of its venerable authors. It is truly Presbyterian as well as Christian in its character; and its sentiments are entirely conformable to those of the first extract given from the discipline of the Scottish Church. If the opposers of the revival had better understood the true spirit and usage of Presbyterianism, and followed the 'advice and direction,' given in this reply to Dr. Rice's letter, it is impossible to estimate the blessed consequences which might, and probably would have resulted to Christian unity and the glory of Christ's cause. Had they simply done nothing, but allow the friends of the revival to conduct it, unmolested, without stirring up men's evil passions and bringing ecclesiastical tyranny to oppose its progress; it is almost certain there would have been no 'schism,' no separation."

As has been shown the Presbyterian Church supported the Great Revival of 1800, though it wisely "disapproved and

condemned" "some errors" and "extravagancies" accompanying it, in the Cumberland Country and elsewhere. How then is this opposition to the revival in the Synod of Kentucky to be explained? The Anti-Revival Party, of five ministers in the Presbytery of Cumberland, was primarily responsible for the beginning of the opposition. Of these five, three, as has been seen, Craighead, Bowman and Balch, later made unenviable records for themselves. The bitterness engendered in the Presbytery was transferred to the Synod. The advice of Mr. Rice and the Assembly's letter to him were ignored. In the Synod the Anti-Revival Party in the Presbytery was joined by others, among them the Rev. John Lyle, of whom more will be heard later.

Dr. Cossitt, expressed the opinion that "the grand difficulty was that the Kentucky Synod, finding that they had been misled by Craighead, Balch and Bowman, as well as their own prejudices and party spirit, to the adoption of unauthorized measures which even the General Assembly had censured, as being 'at least of questionable regularity,' deemed the submission of the young men to their wrong measures indispensable to the justification of their Commission's proceedings. . . . Hence submission, nothing less than unqualified submission, was in all cases demanded, with the unchangeableness of the laws of the Medes and Persians, notwithstanding this had been again and again refused." It appears that a lack of harmony in one frontier Presbytery created an impression on many minds that the Church was opposed to the Great Revival of 1800, which, as has been pointed out, was not true. The Revival Party was correct in holding that the Commission of Synod was unconstitutional, hence was justified in refusing to submit to its demands, though supported by the Synod. The Revival Party was wrong in failing to present its case to the Assembly as the law provided, notwithstanding the long distance to the meeting place of the Assembly, and the difficulty in travel over that long distance. It took too much for granted in presenting its case by an

informal correspondence. The Assembly was at fault in not taking into account the conditions in a frontier country, and the impracticability, if not the impossibility, of these poor preachers on the frontier being able to make the long journey to present their case in a strickly legal way. Had the Synod of Kentucky complied with the law of the Church in sending up its records for 1807, it seems quite likely that the Assembly's action would have been different from its final action in the case. Finally the Assembly was at fault in being moved by a wave of emotionalism, in 1809, as will be shown later, a similar fault which had been charged against the Presbytery of Cumberland.

Anderson, Ewing, King and McLean

Following the advice of Mr. Rice, at a meeting of the Presbytery of Transylvania, on October 9, 1801, Alexander Anderson, Finis Ewing, Samuel King and Ephraim McLean "offered themselves to [the Transylvania] Presbytery for the service of the Church." When the Presbytery of Cumberland was erected in 1802, these men being within its bounds, were under its jurisdiction. In 1810, Ewing and King were two of the founders of the Independent Presbytery of Cumberland, the forerunner of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. Anderson, a man of unusual promise, died before the constitution of the Independent Presbytery, while McLean, a licentiate, was ordained at its first meeting. These men were not college graduates. Ewing had been educated in Spring Hill Academy. The Rev. Dr. Richard Beard, in his biographical sketch of Ewing, states that "he studied Latin somewhat extensively, and Greek to some extent, together with some of the more common branches of science." King and several other candidates were students in this academy, which compared favorably with a number of schools in which Presbyterian ministers were educated. This was eleven years before the Church had founded its first theological seminary. A

student in theology had to secure his theological training, if he had any, under a single teacher in an academy or small college, or under a pastor.

The Synodical Commission

In receiving these young men "for the service of the Church," the action was not only "in accordance with the usage of the Presbytery of Transylvania from its origin," but also in accordance with the practice of the Church of Scotland, under similar conditions. It was also in harmony with a later deliverance of the Assembly, in 1804, in its reply to Mr. Rice. The Presbytery of Cumberland followed the example of the Presbytery of Transylvania, under the advice of Mr. Rice to the latter. But this course was not pleasing to the Rev. Thomas B. Craighead and others, who addressed a letter to the Synod of Kentucky in 1804, finding fault with the action of the Presbytery. "Synod having found it impracticable regularly to investigate and issue the business at their present Session Ordered therefore that the parties both, the complained of and being cited to appear at the next Stated Session of Synod with all the light and testimony on the Subject that can be afforded." At the meeting of the Synod in 1805, "The Committee appointed to examine the Cumberland Presbytery Book reported—On Motion resolved that the Synod now take under consideration said report.

"After mature deliberation upon said report resolved that Synod do concur with the report of their Committee. Ordered that said report be recorded as follows (viz) 'We your committee appointed for the examination of the Cumberland Presbytery Book have attended to that business and report as follows (viz)—The Minutes of two intermediate Presbyteries appointed last spring have not been sent forward. The records of this Presbytery are extremely defective many important words are omitted doubtful one are frequently used,—The history in some places is obscure and the mode of trans-

acting busines frequently violates our rules of discipline—is various and discordant. In page 2nd James Haw is Style[d] a regular Minister of the Methodist Republican Church and takes a seat in Presbytery—We have recognized no such regular Church, and never heard of Mr. Haws recanting those sentiments which he once publicly espoused though they be inimical to the faith of our Church. [It has already been shown how Mr. Haw came under the jurisdiction of the Presbytery of Cumberland.]—We find in different places that persons were examined upon experimental religion and licensed to exhort in Some instances in the bounds of the Presbytery only, and in other instances that they were allowed to appoint Meetings and exhort wherever God in his providence called them—Which proceedings we are of opinion are disorderly—These are generally called regular exhorters sometimes licentiates. The number of these exhorters is about Seventeen some of whom are now ordained to preach: see pages 4, 5, 8, 9, 17, 19, 26, 27. Messrs. Crawford and Dooly who reside in the bounds of Transylvania Presbytery, were contrary to our Book of Discipline taken under the care of the Cumberland Presbytery, licensed to exhort and afterwards appointed subjects for trial, See pages 8 and 19, Page 10 we find this phrase, 'Finis Ewing's Circuit.' In the case of Balch's trial no charges or depositions recorded page 12. Page 21 A Presbyterial act forming a committee to write a Circular Letter recommending to the people to contribute for the support (of the) exhorters which we deem illegal. Resolve of Presbytery respecting Shilo Congregation, pages 21 & 22. Farr an illiterate man licensed with approbation, page 31. . . ." (Sweet, 331, 332.)

"On Motion Resolved the Synod post pone the farther consideration of the business relative to the Cumberland Presbytery until tomorrow morning." (Sweet, p. 332.) "On Motion the business respecting Cumberland Presbytery was again taken up: After considerable deliberation it was Resolved that the Rev. Messrs. John Lyle, J. P. Campbell, Archi-

bald Cameron, Joseph P. Howe, Samuel Rannals, Robert Stuart, Joshua L. Wilson, Robert Wilson, Thos. Clelland, and Isaac Tull, together with Messrs. Wm. McDonald, Robert Brank, James Allen, James Henderson, Richard Gaines, and Andrew Wallace, elder[s] or any seven Ministers of them with as many of the above Elders as may be present be a Commission vested with full Synodical powers to confer with the Members of Cumberland Presbytery and to adjudicate upon their Presbyterial proceedings which appear upon the Minutes of said Presbytery for the purpose aforesaid and take notice of by the Committee appointed by Synod to examine said Minutes—that the said Commission meet on the first Tuesday of December next at Gasper meeting house Logan County in the bounds of Said Presbytery for the purpose aforesaid—that notice be given to the members of said Presbytery by the Stated Clerk of Synod to attend on that day and at the place aforesaid so that a full, fair and friendly investigation may take place." (Sweet, p. 335.)

The Commission's Report

December 5, 1805. "On motion resolved that the Commission of Synod now take into consideration the conduct of Cumberland Presbytery relative to licensing and ordaining men to preach the Gospel." Then follow the details of the Commission's proceedings, leading to its report as follows:

"Whereas the Commission of Synod have in a friendly manner, conferred with the Cumberland Presbytery and have examined into the proceedings of Said Presbytery in licensing men to exhort and to preach the Gospel and in ordaining some to administer ordinances and have found that those proceedings were very irregular and whereas, when those men irregularly licensed &c were called upon to come forward to be examined by the Commission, Mess Wm Hodge James McGready Wm McGee, John Rankin, and Samuel McAdow interposed to prevent the examination,—And also the Modera-

tor called upon the following persons (viz) Robert Guthrie, Saml Hodge, James Porter, David Foster, Finis Ewing, Hugh Kirkpatrick, Thomas Nelson, Thomas Calhoun, Samuel Donald Junior, Samuel King, Saml Blythe, and Robert Bell to come forward and stand an examination as to their qualifications for the Gospel Ministry they refused to comply, thereby virtually renouncing the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church, and it being proclaimed by common fame that the majority of these men are not only illiterate but erroneous in Sentiment Resolved that as the above named persons never had regular authority from the Presbytery of Cumberland to preach the Gospel &c the Commission of Synod prohibit and they are hereby solemnly prohibit the said persons from exhorting, preaching and administering ordinances in consequence of any authority which they have obtained from the Cumberland Presbytery, until they submit to our jurisdiction, and undergo the requisite examination and it is farther resolved that the following persons (viz) James Farr, Lawrence Rollison, Robert Houston, James Crawford, James Duggins, Michael Findley, Ephraim McLain, John Hodge, Alexander Chapman, Wm McClure, Stephen Clinton and Wm Moore, who are now absent together with James Haw be laid under the same prohibition." (Sweet, pp. 341, 342.)

The Synod of Kentucky met in Lexington, in October, 1806. "On Motion Resolved that Synod now take into consideration, the following subject brought forward through the Committee of Overtures. Whereas it appears that difficulties of a particular nature exist in Cumberland Presbytery so as in a great measure to incapacitate them for doing business, the Synod having taken this matter under consideration came to the following Resolution.—Resolved that the Presbytery of Cumberland be and it is hereby dissolved and the Members which composed it are hereby annexed to the Transylvania Presbytery." (Sweet, p. 353.)

Constitutionality?

The Presbytery of Cumberland questioned the constitutionality of a *"Commission vested with full synodical powers" "to adjudicate"* in the case. It was held that the Commission was usurping the power that belonged to the Presbytery alone. The General Assembly in 1807 expressed the opinion that the appointment of this Commission was "at least of questionable regularity," and therefore advised that the Synod "seriously review these proceedings." The Rev. Dr. James P. Wilson, pastor of the First Church, Philadelphia, in which the Assembly met in 1807, stated that it was "the better opinion" in the Assembly that the "Commission was without constitutional authority and wholly void." The Rev. Dr. Ezra Stiles Ely, Stated Clerk of the Assembly from 1825 to 1936, in his brief history of the Cumberland Presbyterians, published in *The Philadelphian,* after quoting the Assembly's advice to the Synod of Kentucky in 1807, mentioned above, adds: "There can be no doubt now in the mind of any sound Presbyterian, but that the suspension of the ministers above named was wholly unconstitutional, and ought to be held to be void."

The Licentiates Persevered

The young men licensed to preach by the Revival Party have been traced from the Presbytery of Cumberland through the Synod of Kentucky to the General Assembly. What was their final record? Dr. McDonnold answers this question as follows: "Of all those whom the Revival Party licensed to preach, there is not one single name which is not held in the profoundest veneration to-day in all the field where they labored. Not one of them left a reputation tarnished by heresy, apostasy, or defection from the Church and services of the Lord Jesus. They all died with their armor on after a noble warfare. Such things can not be said of those who constituted the other party of the Cumberland Presbytery."

Chapter IV

BEFORE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

The General Assembly, 1807, "on hearing the report of the Committee appointed to examine the records of the Synod of Kentucky, the Assembly, after deliberation, resolved that a letter be addressed to that Synod, as follows, viz.

"The record of your proceedings in regard to the dissolution of the Presbytery of Cumberland, and other measures connected with that act, has attracted the marked attention of this Assembly, and been the subject of much discussion. The Assembly have truly sympathized with your Synod, in reviewing the very interesting circumstances in which you have been placed, and the embarrassing concerns which you have been called to manage. While the Assembly have found it their duty, on the one hand, to approve of many of your proceedings on the very irregular and censurable conduct of that Presbytery, and even to commend the zeal and decision with which you have acted; they are constrained on the other, to suggest that your proceedings in demanding that the young men irregularly licensed and ordained, be given up to your Body for examination; in suspending the irregularly ordained ministers without process in their case; and in suspending Messrs. Hodge and Rankin, for not submitting to the re-examination of the young men, are at least of questionable regularity. They therefore advise that you seriously review these proceedings, and consider whether some of them ought not to be rescinded, and steps speedily taken to mitigate the suffering which your censure appears to have produced, and to remove at least a part of the complaints which it has excited. In doing this we cannot be supposed to recommend that any demands of our constitutional standards of doctrine,

discipline and government should be violated or disregarded. These demands are equally binding on us and on you, and the recognition of their justice and obligation ought to be considered *as indispensible* in all who are to exercise the holy ministry in connection with our Church. But there is, and ever must be, supposed in those who are vested with power the right and the duty of exercising a sound discretion, which will consult the spirit, as well as the letter of the law; which will sometimes forbid the exercise of power which is possessed; which will endeavour with equal caution to avoid the extremes of rigour and of laxness; which will yield something, yet not concede every thing to circumstances; which, in a word, will recollect that power is given for edification, and not for destruction, and endeavour to be guided by this rule. We hope, brethren, that in the exercise of this discretion, you may soon be able to re-establish the Presbytery of Cumberland, and to restore to Christian communion, and ministerial usefulness, some of its former members and licentiates, without sacrificing either the doctrines, or government of our Church. Of this you must judge; and we pray that the great Head of the Church may enable you to judge and act, as that the true and lasting interests of his Church may really be promoted by your measures.

"Signed by order of the Assembly."

(Minutes, 1807.)

The Council's Letter to the Assembly

It was impracticable, if not impossible for the Revival Party to be represented at the General Assembly, so the Council, presented in a later chapter, sent a letter to the Assembly of 1807, setting forth its position. Mr. Smith prints this letter of about three thousand words in his history, the only source from which it is available. While the Letter is long, its contents justifies its reproduction. It follows:

"Rev. Fathers and Brethren—

"We have neither the pleasure nor advantage of being known by face to any of you. Common fame may have borne our names unto you, and some part of our conduct under unfavorable coloring. If not, you will shortly hear of us through the medium of the Kentucky Synod. We are known to a distance by title (though falsely so called) of the Majority of Cumberland Presbytery. We are a few brethren who labor under grievances occasioned by the Synod of Kentucky, neither can we indulge one hope of having them removed by that reverend body.

"As our local situation renders the personal attendance of any of us at the General Assembly almost impracticable, we take this as our only alternative to present unto you, as guardians under Christ of that branch of the Church to which we belong, our humble petition for a redress of our grievances.

"That you may have a just view of our situation and distress, we humbly conceive it necessary to give you a brief history of facts, relative to our present case, as they transpired in this country. We therefore beseech you to hear us patiently. We had the happiness, the most of us, of having removed to this country before, and in that ever memorable year 1800, when the gracious work of God broke out in such power amongst us. There were but four Presbyterian ministers who were truly friendly to the revival in the bounds of West Tennessee and West Kentucky—two in each. While we preached the same doctrines we had years before—the doctrines of the Bible and our Confession of Faith,—the Spirit of the Lord accompanied the word with unusual power to the hearts of the people. The effects of this divine energy were quickly manifested by most awful outcries for mercy—by falling down, speechless and motionless, in many cases for hours. When speech and a degree of thought were recovered, the most open and full confession of sin, and importunate

intreaties for pardon were made. Such cries, accompanied with struggles for faith as the gift of God, we never heard nor saw before. Many who had been subjects of conversion years before, but in a less visible manner, were astonished and confounded, while they beheld such unusual exercises, and knew not what all would issue in, but were often afraid, in distraction and confusion. Sometimes while our tears and cries were mingling with those of the mourners, for mercy upon them, with pleasing amazement we could perceive the day-spring from on high was visiting them. The opening views they then expressed of the gospel scheme of salvation—the fullness, suitableness and freeness in Christ—his ability to save—the beauty of holiness, the preciousness of God's word—the truth of his promises—the equity of his law—the hatefulness of sin, on which they could with eloquence expatiate on the full return of bodily strength and activity—their sympathizing concern for the unconverted—their persuasive arguments to come to Christ—their love to God, his people and cause—the transports of joy and holy delight with which they were filled, expressed in shouts of praise to him who had washed them in his blood,—would have convinced (yea actually did many) a Deist, that but a Divine Agent could produce such happy effects. When we add the holy, upright, self-denying lives which numbers manifest to this day, every shadow of doubt disappears. The work broke out nearly in the center of our country. The unusual exercises and appearances were noised abroad. Our sacramental occasions were attended by vast multitudes, and remarkable tokens of God's presence and power. Numbers came out to see. Here were Deists, drunkards, Sabbath-breakers, and all the different characters that compose the great class of the wicked. Many of them fell under deep convictions, and to all appearance became the happy subjects of conversion. Some of them who came from afar, when they returned home, immediately began to exhort their families and neighbors to seek salvation. They appointed meetings for prayer. The Lord remarkably

blessed those meetings in convictions and conversions of many. Thus, in a few months, the blessed work spread like a rapid flame from center to circumference of our country. The attention of all our inhabitants appeared to be aroused.

"Now, truly the harvest was great and the laborers few. Unable to resist the pressing solicitations from every quarter for preaching, with unutterable pleasure we went out, laboring day and night, until our bodies were worn down, and after all we could not supply one-third of the places calling upon us for preaching. While thus engaged, and the gracious work going on, we observed what was very remarkable, that in almost every neighborhood there was some one who appeared to have uncommon gifts for exhortation and prayer, and were zealously engaged in the exercises thereof, while the Lord wrought by them to the conversion of many. Viewing the infant state of the Church in our country, the anxious desire for religious instruction, the gifts, diligence and success of those we have mentioned, and the Scriptural authority for exhortation, we were induced with almost every member in the Presbytery to open the door for the licensure of exhorters. Well knowing it was a liberty that was and would be taken; and concluding if taken by presbyterial authority it might prevent disorder and weakness. It was not agreed that any of those who might be licensed and manifested extraordinary talents and piety, should be considered as candidates for the ministry: also that for their improvement they should have subjects appointed, on which they were to be heard at our stated sessions of Presbytery; that if by their improvement, piety and usefulness, they purchased to themselves a good degree, they might be set apart to the holy ministry. [See the Assembly's reply to Mr. Rice's Letter.] Accordingly, several made application, who were examined on experimental religion, and the motives inducing them to public exhortation. Those we judged qualified were licensed [to exhort]. The first were all men of families, and somewhat advanced in years. Out they went, leaving wives and chil-

dren, houses and lands, for Christ's sake and the gospel; suffering hunger, cold and weariness, for weeks in succession; but the Lord was with them and made them happy instruments in helping on his work in the conversion of many. After a long trial of these men in different parts of our country, there came forward to our Presbytery several petitions for their licensure to the ministry, signed by hundreds of the most moral and religious characters where they labored.

"From our personal knowledge of those men's good talents, piety and usefulness; from the numerous warm petitions of the people at large—from the example of many Presbyteries —from the silence of Scripture on literary accomplishments— from your own declaration in answer to Mr. Rice's Letter, viz: 'That human learning is not essential to the ministry'— from the exceptions made in the Bood of Discipline, in extraordinary cases,—we humbly conceived that it would not be a transgression either of the law of God or the rules of our Church, to license men of such a description. We therefore did license them, and a few others at different times afterward: some of them with, and some without literary acquisitions; but all men of gifts, piety and influence, having spent years previous in exhortation, before they were admitted to the ministry. Several were licensed to exhort, whose names are on our minutes whom we never had a design of admitting to the ministry. Now the work of the Lord went on. Numbers of young, promising congregations were formed and regularly organized. The Lord added to them such as we hope, shall be saved. So that, in the course of a few years the wilds of our country echoed with the praise of the Lord. Savage ignorance was changed into a knowledge of God and his dear Son; and savage ferocity into the lamb-like spirit of Jesus. Truly the wilderness and the solitary place appeared to be glad, and the desert to rejoice and blossom as the rose. The parched ground became a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water.

"Thus, while the glorious work prevailed, love and harmony abounded among ministers, exhorters and people. A few of our opposing bretheren in the Presbytery carried up to the Synod of Kentucky, a common fame letter, formed by themselves. In this letter, they grossly misrepresented our characters, conduct, and doctrines we taught. Although they were eye and ear witnesses of all we did in a presbyterial capacity, yet they stated them as circulating reports, and declared at the same time, that they did not offer them as complaints, nor feel themselves bound to support those charges. This was in the year 1803. In 1804, a Commission composed of a part, and authorized by the Synod of Kentucky invested with full power to adjudicate upon, and finally decide on our case, were sent down among us. Ministers and exhorters were all ordered to appear at their bar. We appeared accordingly, and produced the minutes of our Presbytery, and expected them to serve as written testimony of facts. But the Commission paid very little regard to them. They took the common-fame letter, formed their docket from it, and arranged their charges against us in the same order they stood in the letter. We plead to be taken on our minutes, which were written testimony of all we had done. And, if they took us upon that letter, that they would call forward the authors thereof, who had subscribed their names to it [the "authors" of the letter were "Rev. Thomas B. Craighead and others"], and agreeably to discipline, on charges exhibited against a gospel minister, require them to support those charges, or stand liable to censure for slanderous reports. But the Commission, regardless of all our entreaties, commanded us to order. This was the ground on which we were taken: consequently called upon to answer for holding and preaching false doctrines, giving unjust judgment, licensing not only unlearned, but men of immoral characters, to exhort and preach. At the same time our accusers were free from any fears of being censured for false and slanderous charges. Although nothing in any nor all the charges brought against

us, either were or could be proved in the smallest degree, except that of licensing unlearned men to preach, which every member in Synod knew years before, yet were we treated with the utmost severity. Threatened with synodical power, and told to remember we stood at their Bar: when, with meekness and sincerity we offered any thing for our defense, such reflections and misconstructions were cast upon it, as would have been truly grating to a well informed polite ear, from gentlemen of the bar—much more so, when coming from the ministers of the meek, forbearing Redeemer to their unprovoking and uncondemned brethren. The Commission formed a resolution that we should give up all our licentiates fully to their power to be dealt with as they saw proper. To this we neither did not could accede, because, as a Presbytery, we had a right to examine and license our own licentiates. Upon this the Commission in a very awful and public manner forbad all of our licentiates, preachers and exhorters, any more to speak in the name of Jesus as public teachers, and cited us to the next annual session of Synod in October, 1806: the whole of us for not submitting to the authority of the Commission, and three of us for false doctrines. Conscious of it being our right, as a Presbytery, to examine our own candidates, and well knowing the unspotted characters of those we had licensed—their good natural endowments, piety and usefulness, the destitute and dangerous state of the societies under our care [there was yet danger from roving New Lights], we encouraged our licentiates to comply with the entreaties of the people (many of whom were present by their representatives at the session of the Commission), to go and labor among them as formerly. You will be told that they were not regularly licensed, having only received the Confession of Faith partially, but the fears which caused that exception rose merely from the concise manner in which the highly mysterious doctrine of divine decrees is there expressed [Confession of Faith, Chapter III; Chapter X, Section III], which was thought led to fatality. So far are they and we

from rejecting either the doctrines or discipline therein contained, that every preacher and exhorter in our connexion have adopted and received the Confession, firmly persuaded that it contains the best system of Scripture doctrine and discipline of any known by us upon earth—but not so sacred nor infallible as the Scriptures. Having never once meditated nor desired to become a new party, nor to produce secession in the Church, we have not constituted as a Presbytery, since the Commission silenced our licentiates, neither do we mean to constitute, until our circumstances render it necessary; or until every hope fails of having our rights as a Presbytery restored, and grievances redressed by the interposition and authority of your reverend body.

"In order to prevent divisions and falling a prey to numerous sectaries, we found it necessary that ministers, and the people by their representatives, should meet occasionally in the form of a Council, to help on the now laboring cause of God amongst us, until in his gracious providence our situation may be changed. At these meetings, all our licentiates have cheerfully submitted to a re-examination upon divinity as taught in our Shorter Catechism; and also upon English grammar and other useful studies.

"Domestic circumstances permitted only two of us complying with the citation by the Commission of Synod in October, 1806. When our business came on, the first charge was for false doctrine, viz: denying the doctrine of election, and holding that every man is born with a seed of grace, which if improved will lead to glory. Well knowing that this was a common fame charge, and that no person on earth could support it against us; and also, that according to discipline, we ought first to have been called before the Presbytery to which we belonged, (but never were) yet we cheerfully submitted to be examined by Synod. A committee was appointed for that purpose. We had a free conversation upon doctrine; and from every appearance, the committee in a very

short time was fully satisfied that the charge was false. We told them, and now declare, that so far are we from denying the doctrine of election that we firmly believe it a doctrine of the Bible, and so highly mysterious that we are unable fully to comprehend it. We utterly deny that man is born with a seed of grace, but firmly believe that he is born with a principle of enmity against God, which, if not removed by regeneration, will lead to destruction. Synod required our reasons for not submitting to the authority of their Commission. We gave them as above stated. They then called upon us to deliver up our licentiates to them to be treated as they might judge proper. We answered, we could not see it consistent with discipline to make a demand on our presbyterial rights, unless we by mal-conduct, had forfeited them. They then told us we must and should give them up, or suffer suspension. We answered that according to the express letter of the discipline on the powers of the Presbytery, we had a right to examine, license and ordain our candidates, and therefore could not on principles of discipline give them up; also that on the principles of their demand, every thing that we might hereafter do in a presbyterial capacity, (though strictly up to discipline) was a mere nullity unless it met with their approbation. Upon this we were suspended from the performance of every part of our ministerial office and the communion of the Church, until we manifest repentance. When we returned home and informed our people, they universally expressed their disappointment and earnestly besought us to continue our labors as formerly amongst them. Knowing that through grace we had been kept from immoral conduct, making divisions, or propagating false doctrines, we yielded to their entreaties, humbly believing that, in so doing, we would not violate our ordination vows; for the Scriptures as well as discipline, teach that nothing but immorality, heresy and schism merit suspension—none of which did the Synod appear even to suspect us for, or charge us with, as the cause of our suspension; but solely for not sub-

mitting to their authority. Thus, Synod, by their Commission, silenced all our licentiates. They, themselves, suspended us, and thereby left every congregation in our bounds at once destitute of all public means of grace, and exposed to the ravages of various sectaries.

"Thus have we given you as concise and just a statement of our conduct, circumstances and distresses as we can. Revered Fathers and Brothers, we now earnestly entreat your immediate interposition on our case; for it will not with safety admit delay. We humbly hope from the view you now have of our distress, you will sympathize with us. By your authority we pray that the prohibition may be taken off our licentiates and the suspension from us; that you restore our presbyterial rights, never forfeited, but wrested from us; and appoint us a Presbytery, as there are bounds and members sufficient for two. We never have embraced the idea of an unlearned ministry. The peculiar state of our country and extent of the revival reduced us to the necessity of introducing more of that description than we otherwise would. We sincerely esteem a learned and pious ministry, and hope the Church will never be left destitute of such an ornament. Be assured that we feel ourselves equally bound and as strongly disposed to maintain the peace and purity of the Church, the dignity and influence of her ministers as the Synod of Kentucky. We have our struggles to prevent the separation of many respectable members from our Church, through their resentment to the Synod toward us. Our most quieting persuasive with them is, never let us make divisions, nor separate from the Church to which we belong, but lay our distresses before the General Assembly, and wait the issue. So that if our grievances are not redressed, our rights restored and established by your speedy interposition and authority, every respectable Presbyterian congregation in Cumberland and the Barrens of Kentucky, will be struck off your connection. We humbly trust that you will not view this as a challenge, but a piece of honest information to

prevent an evil we sincerely deprecate. If you grant our petition, you will thereby cement all the above to the Church over which, under Christ, you preside. Entitled, we believe to the blessing of peace-makers and healers of such a dangerous breach, you will give joy and gladness to thousands, excite praise and thanksgiving to the Lord amongst all our societies—have their blessing upon, and their prayers for you in all your deliberations, and from none more sincerely than your distressed subscribing brothers."

Signed

SAMUEL MCADOW,
WILLIAM HODGE,
JOHN RANKIN,
WILLIAM MCGEE
} for the Council.

(Smith, pp. 617-625.)

The Assembly's Reply

"The Committee appointed to write an answer to the remonstrance of Messrs. Samuel McAdow, William Hodge, John Rankin, and William McGee, brought in the following answer, which, being amended, was adopted.

"Brethren,

"The Assembly have received your address, in which you inform them, that the Synod of Kentucky have suspended you from your ministerial office, and in which you request this Assembly to interpose in your case without delay. The Assembly are grieved at finding, that any unhappy differences exist in that part of the Church of Christ, in which you reside. The conduct of the Presbytery of Cumberland in licensing and ordaining a number of persons not possessing the qualifications required by the book of discipline [Can this action be harmonized with the action taken by the Assembly in 1804, in answer to the Letter of Mr. Rice?], and without explicit adoption of the Confession of Faith, appear

to have been the origin of the evils of which you now complain. The Assembly are constrained to express their decided disapprobation of this conduct, as being *highly irregular and unconstitutional;* leading to the most dangerous consequences, in introducing into our Church as teachers, illiterate men, and men of any religious principles, however erroneous. But inasmuch as you have not regularly appealed to this Assembly, they do not consider themselves, as called on judicially to decide on your case. The Assembly have advised the Synod of Kentucky to review their proceedings with regard to you, and to their decision we refer you. We exhort you, brethren, to return to a strict and steady adherence to the constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and that you sincerely endeavour to promote the peace and best interest of the Redeemer's kingdom." (Minutes, 1807.)

About the same time Mr. Hodge received the following letter, which sheds considerable light on the proceedings of that body in this affair.

A Personal Letter

"*Rev. and Dear Sir:*—Although personally unknown to you in the flesh, I have a humble hope we may have drunk in the same blessed spirit. Mr. Trigg, of your country, can inform you of my character and standing in this place. I hold a humble membership in the First Presbyterian Church in this city [Philadelphia], under the pastoral care of the Rev. James P. Wilson.

"The unhappy differences in your quarter of our Church, so immediately succeeding what the great proportion of Presbyterian interest in this place believe to be a great revival of the work of God, has excited deep concern, and our General Assembly have had the matter fully before them. It appears to be the decided opinion of the majority of the General Assembly, that no Synod has a right to proceed against ministers or individuals, except the matter shall have

come before them by appeal from a Presbytery—that only a Presbytery can call its members to account for errors in doctrine or practice—that a man once ordained by a Presbytery, is an ordained minister, though the Presbytery have acted improperly in not requiring due qualification, and that even a Presbytery could not afterward depose, but for cause arising or made public after ordination—that the licentiates are always in the power of the Presbytery to examine them and withdraw their licensure at discretion. . . .

"But what the General Assembly have finally done, will appear very inconclusive on these points, because they wished to avoid offending the Synod and Presbytery, and the minority in the Assembly took advantage of this to make the business end as much as possible in such a manner as not to be construed against the power of Synods and General Assembly. The General Assembly have however questioned the regularity of the proceedings of your Synod. . . .

"You will see my name among the Trustees of the General Assembly, which will apologize for the liberty I have taken in dropping you this; a desire that you should have correct information, also prompted to it. Any information you can give me at any time of the success of the Redeemer's cause among you will be thankfully received." (Smith, pp. 625-627.)

"At the sessions of Kentucky Synod, October, 1807, that body reviewed and confirmed their proceedings; and at their previous annual sessions, they had dissolved Cumberland Prebytery, they now directed Transylvania Presbytery to settle the affair with the members of the Council. This unconstitutional measure of Kentucky Synod was calculated to cut off the complaining brethren from all hope of redress; who before they could be heard in the highest judicature of the Church by regular appeal had to appear in the first place before a lower judicature than that which first pronounced sentence against them: and did they appeal from their decision they must again stand before the bar of the body, by

whom they had already been condemned. Moreover as the Constitution of the Church admits of no such procedure, it has provided no remedy for those who are thus illegally treated. It is indeed passing strange that a body of men who undertook to deal with others for violating the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, should be guilty of the most flagrant departure from both its letter and spirit." (Smith, p. 627.)

A Petition

"In the spring of A. D. 1808, the members of the Council sent a petition to the General Assembly, praying for interference of that body in their behalf, to which the Assembly replied, 'that as the matter had not been brought up to them by appeal from the Synod of Kentucky, they could give no relief; but must refer the petitioners to the Synod itself as the only constitutional body competent to reverse what they had done wrong." (Smith, p. 628.)

The Synod of Kentucky severely criticised the Presbytery of Cumberland for failure to send up some of their records for inspection. Now the Synod of Kentucky failed to send up its records, as the law provides, to the General Assembly of 1808, for review. "Immediately after the adjournment of the Assembly (1808), Rev. James P. Wilson, minister of the First Presbyterian Church, in Philadelphia, wrote the following letter to Mr. Hodge.

The Wilson Letter

"*Reverend and dear brother in the Lord*—It was chiefly with a view to your case, that I was in the Assembly this year; many of us are anxious that you and your brethren should be relieved from your embarrassing situation. The great majority of the General Assembly were entirely disposed to do every thing in your favor that would be just and proper,

or that you could reasonably have wished. *If the records of the Synod of Kentucky had been before us, we should without difficulty have reversed your suspension: but we had no communication from that Synod, and could not concern with them absent.*" Etc. (Author's italics.) (Smith, p. 628.) On this point Dr. Sweet observes that "the General Assembly of 1808 was inclined to uphold the Cumberland Presbytery and condemn the Synod of Kentucky, on the ground that a Synod cannot deal with individual members except in case of appeal."

As has been seen the Assembly, meeting in May, 1807, after examining the records of the Synod of Kentucky, dealing with the Cumberland Presbytery, "resolved that a letter be addressed to that Synod." In that letter the Assembly informed the Synod that some of its actions "are at least of questionable regularity," and advised it seriously to review its records, and consider whether some of them ought not to be rescinded. As indicated the Synod did not send its records, as the law provides, to the Assembly meeting in May, 1808.

The Synod at its meeting, October, 1808, addressed the Assembly as follows: "The Synod lament that anything like a difference of opinion should exist between them and the General Assembly with regard to the Government of our Church and in order to give a Just view of the Ground traced and retraced by the Synod upon those points deemed of questionable Regularity the Assembly are requested to attend to the following statement." (Sweet, p. 373.) Then follows a long statement justifying its procedure in the case. This statement was sent to the Assembly in 1809.

Lyle's Tears

The Rev. John Lyle, whom Mr. Smith says was "one of the most violent members on the Commission," was a commissioner to the Assembly. He made a characteristic speech before the Assembly in support of the Synod. Dr. Davidson

states that "he possessed, in an unusual degree, the power of unlocking the founts of feeling, and awakening a sympathetic interest in the bosoms of his auditors. Even the General Assembly were taken by surprise in 1809, when he defended the Synod in the matter of the Cumberland Presbyterians. Bursting into tears he made a most impassioned appeal, and the Assembly were so affected that their final judgement was very different from that to which they had at first inclined." By this speech, continues Dr. Davidson, "the tide was completely turned. The proceedings of the Synod were sustained without a dissenting voice." Dr. Sweet agrees that it was the "strong emotional appeal of John Lyle," which completely turned the tide and influenced the Assembly to uphold the Synod.

Dr. Cossitt indicates the nature of Mr. Lyle's appeal. He says: "When the whole affair [the proceedings of the Synod in the Cumberland Presbytery case] was about to meet the scrutiny of the Assembly, it is not wonderful that Mr. Lyle, 'bursting into tears, made a most impassioned appeal,' that he wept freely as he portrayed in vivid colors the probable effects of the discomfortures and disgrace" of those whom he termed "the friends of truth and order." The Revival Party was not able to send a representative to the Assembly. Had the Rev. Finis Ewing been there, and had he been accorded the courtesy of the floor, the result probably would have been different.

If Drs. Davidson, Cossitt and Sweet are correct in their judgment as to the emotional effect of Mr. Lyle's speech, then the Assembly was moved by an emotionalism, such as that for which the Synod had so severely criticized the Revival Party.

Chapter V

THE COUNCIL AND THE PRESBYTERY

On October 28, 1806, the Synod of Kentucky dissolved the Presbytery of Cumberland, and annexed its members to the Presbytery of Transylvania. The revival members of the dissolved Presbytery, says Mr. Smith, "consulted together with regard to the course they ought to pursue. After mature deliberation, they agreed to continue to preach the gospel, and administer the ordinances as before; and without regarding the illegal prohibition of the Commission of Synod, they encouraged the young men to continue the exercise of their respective functions. They also resolved to form themselves into a Council, consisting of the ministers, elders and representatives from the vacancies which formerly composed the majority of the Cumberland Presbytery, but at which no presbyterial business was to be transacted; and to this resolution they firmly adhered. These resolutions received the hearty approbation of all the congregations in the Presbytery, except a very few who had been unfriendly to the revival from first to last.

"As the Head of the Church was pleased to vouch safe his gracious presence and blessing, the revival was not impeded, but continued to prosper: the churches were strengthened, and many were added to them, of such as shall be saved. Thus did these despised and persecuted servants of Jesus see the work of the Lord prospering in their hands; and although they knew not what would be the issue of the difficulties in which they were involved, yet they enjoyed the testimony of a good conscience, and were assured that their labor would not be in vain." The Revival Party published its version of the controversy in "The Circular Letter" and in Buck's Theo-

logical Dictionary, both of which will be found in this chapter.

The Independent Presbytery

After the dissolution of the Presbytery of Cumberland by the Synod of Kentucky, in 1806, the Revival Party transacted no presbyterial business, but met for mutual encouragement in a Council from time to time, until the fall of 1809. It was during these years that the General Assembly twice passed on the controversy. The Rev. James McGready, the father of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, remained in the Presbyterian Church, just as John Wesley, the father of Methodism, remained in the Church of England. Mr. McGready took very little interest in the Council, and declined to enter an Independent Presbytery, though to the end of his life he was in sympathy with the Independent movement.

The Rev. Finis Ewing was really the leading spirit from this time on in the Revival Party. After the General Assembly in 1809 rendered its decision, the Council determined to make one more effort at a reconciliation with the Synod, and in case of failure, then to consider the advisability of the organization of an Independent Presbytery. The effort to secure a reconciliation with the Synod failed. The Council met in October, 1809, and heard the report from the Synod. McGready and Hodge refused to constitute an Independent Presbytery. Only four ordained ministers were left—McGee, Ewing, King and McAdow. McAdow had removed to Dickson County, Tennessee, probably in 1806. He was advanced in years and was in poor health, so he had not been able to attend the meetings of the Council regularly. McGee held aloof for a time, pending a clearer understanding of a theological question, but united with the Presbytery in October, 1810. So Ewing and King only remained of the ordained ministers, who were willing to constitute an Independent Presbytery. Ewing was willing to organize with two ministers,

but King insisted that there must be at least three. The Council met in October, 1809, and adjourned to meet on March 20, 1810. This was to be the last meeting of the Council, after which its members would be free to act, each for himself, provided, however, that in the meantime three ministers had not constituted an Independent Presbytery, in which event the Presbytery, which had been constituted, would convene at the time and the place to which the Council stood adjourned to meet, when all were to adhere to the Presbytery. It was now a question whether a third minister could be found in Kentucky. Special efforts failed to find the third man.

The time was drawing near for the last meeting of the Council, so if anything was to be done to secure an Independent organization, it must be done soon. Ewing and King went to the home of Licentiate McLean to consult with him, on February 2, 1810. It was not known whether McAdow would be willing to become the third minister. It was a day's ride on horseback to his Tennessee home. On the morning of the third the three men set out for the McAdow home, reaching it late in the evening. The plan was laid before Mr. McAdow. He took the matter under prayerful consideration. He did not reach a conclusion until early Sunday morning, February 4, 1810, when the Independent Presbytery of Cumberland was organized, as the following record indicates.

The Covenant

In Dickson County, Tennessee State, at the Rev. McAdow's this 4th day of February, 1810:

"We, Samuel McAdow, Finis Ewing, and Samuel King, regularly ordained ministers in the Presbyterian Church, against whom no charge either of immorality or heresy has ever been exhibited before any of the Church judicatures; having waited in vain more than four years; in the meantime petitioning the General Assembly for a redress of grievances,

and a restoring of our violated rights, have, and do hereby agree and determine, to constitute a Presbytery, known by the name of the Cumberland Presbytery, on the following conditions:

"All candidates for the ministry who may hereafter be licensed by this Presbytery, and all licentiates or probationers who may hereafter be ordained by this Presbytery, shall be required before such licensure and ordination, to receive and adopt the Confession and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church, except the idea of fatality that seems to be taught under the mysterious doctrine of predestination. ["This high mystery of predestination," as the Westminster Confession of Faith terms it.]

"It is to be understood, however, that such as can adopt the Confession without such exceptions shall not be required to make any. Moreover, all licentiates, before they are set apart to the whole work of the ministry, (ordained), shall be required to undergo an examination on English grammar, geography, astronomy, natural and moral philosophy, and Church history. It will not be understood that examination on theology, experimental religion, and a call to the ministry will be omitted. The Presbytery may also require an examination on all or any part of the above branches of literature, before licensure, if they deem it expedient."

After the organization of the Independent Presbytery, and the signing of the Covenant, Licentiate Ephraim McLean, who had accompanied Messrs. Ewing and King, was ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry. Mr. McLean was received as a candidate in 1802. He lacked very little of reaching the educational standard. He had declined ordination, pending, by private study, to meet the full requirement.

The business of organization completed the Independent Presbytery adjourned to meet at the Ridge Meeting House, March 20, 1810, the place and the time to which the Council stood adjourned to meet, provided an independent Presby-

tery had not been organized before that date. At this meeting it was "ordered, that Messrs. Samuel McAdow, Finis Ewing, Ephraim McLean, James B. Porter and Young Ewing, or a majority of them, draw a circular letter, as soon as they can, which is to be carefully examined, and superintend the printing of a thousand copies, to be distributed under the direction of the Presbytery." At a meeting of the Presbytery, October 24, 1810, this Committee reported compliance with the order. The Circular Letter follows.

The Circular Letter

"Dear Brethren:—The time is at last come when we must either sacrifice our religious liberties and conscience to what we judge unreasonable demands, cease our endeavors to promote the work of God among you as we have hitherto done, or constitute a Presbytery separate from the Synod of Kentucky. We choose the latter as the only way in which we can have the answer of a good conscience. We therefore deem it expedient to give you a retrospective view of the cause, together with the progressive means, by which matters have been brought to this issue.

"A number of you will easily recollect, that about the close of the last century, or beginning of the present, God, in a very remarkable manner, began to revive his work amongst the inhabitants of this western country, the first manifestations of which appeared under the ministerial labors of the Rev. James McGready, in Logan County. At the first commencement of this glorious revival, as also in its progress, the bodily affections and exercises of a number of those who were its subjects, were very uncommon. This soon caused a rumor to go abroad, and the people from every quarter came out to see. The consequence of which was, that they not only had their curiosity satisfied, but a great number had their hearts deeply affected. This, in the hand of God, was a blessed means of spreading the work through various parts of our

country. For a while, at first, all the ministers in our bounds seemed to participate in the glorious effusion of the Holy Spirit, and correspondent to this proclaimed themselves friends to the revival. But alas! it was soon after discoverable, that some of them had changed their opinion, otherwise they had never been well-established. The consequence of this apparent change may easily be inferred, notwithstanding the work still progressed. And although the few who remained friends to the revival labored in the work of the ministry night and day, yet the cries of the people for more preaching were incessant, and those cries soon became so general, that they were heard from many parts of an extensive frontier. The ministers, in return, could only pity, and pray for them; the congregations being so numerous, and in such a scattered situation, that they could not by any possible endeavor supply them.

"About this time, a venerable father in the ministry, Rev. David Rice, who was then a resident in one of the upper counties of Kentucky, came down and attended a communion with some of our preachers in a vacant congregation; and he, having learned the situation of our country, and the pressing demand that there was for more preaching, proposed the plan of encouraging such amongst us as appeared to be men of good talents, and who also discovered a disposition to exercise their gifts in a public way, to preach the Gospel, although they might not have acquired that degree of human education which the letter of discipline requires. This proposition was truly pleasing to our preachers, and indeed it found general acceptance among the people, as soon as intimations thereof were given. The consequence was, that an uncommon spirit of prayer now seemed to prevail throughout the societies, that the Great Head of the Church would, not only open an effectual door into the ministry, but also that he would raise up, qualify, and bring men into that sacred office, whose labors he would own and bless. And, brethren, that God who never told Israel to seek him in vain, evidently

heard and answered the prayers of his people. Some whose minds had been previously impressed with the duty of calling sinners to repentance, and of bearing public testimony to the work of God and the religion of Jesus Christ, and upon whom also the eyes of the Church for some time had been fixed with a degree of expectation, now made their exercise of mind on this subject known to their fathers in the ministry. The prospect was truly pleasing to the preachers, yet they considered it expedient to act with the greatest caution; for although the step about to be taken was not unprecedented in the Presbyterian Church, yet, seeing it was out of the common track, they were well aware that some of their brethren in the ministry would oppose the measure. However, they ventured to encourage three or four of the young men to prepare written discourses and present them to the Transylvania Presbytery as a specimen of their abilities. They accordingly prepared discourses, and at the next stated session of said Presbytery their case was brought before that reverend body. They met with warm opposition, arising principally, however, from a quarter rather inimical to the revival. But after a lengthy conversation on the subject, in which there was much altercation, a majority of the members consented and agreed, that the young men might be permitted to read their discourses to an aged member alone, who should make report to the judicature. We believe the report was favorable. It was then directed, as well as we can recollect, that those men should prepare other discourses, to be read at the next Presbytery. They accordingly prepared, and three of them attended; but as soon as the subject of their case was resumed a warm debate ensued. At length, however, a majority of the members agreed to hear their discourses. After they were read, the question was put: 'Shall these men be received as candidates for the ministry?' The vote being taken, one of the three was received, and two were rejected by a majority of one vote only. This circumstance much depressed the spirits of a number of the preachers, who were

real friends to the revival, and likewise the congregations generally, that had so earnestly desired their licensure; but more especially the spirits of those two candidates were depressed. They were men in a matrimonial state, and could not consistently with those relative duties, by which they were bound to their families, go and acquire the knowledge of all those forms of literature required in the Book of Discipline. Fain would they have returned home and solaced themselves in the enjoyment of their domestic comforts, as private Christians, if they could have done so and kept a good conscience; but this they could not do; nor could they with clearness of conscience become members of any other Christian society where the ministerial door was not so straight and difficult, and, consequently, where they might have been at liberty to exercise their popular talents with approbation. No: they were attached to all the essential doctrines, and likewise the discipline, of the Presbyterian Church. It was in this Church that they were early dedicated to God by their parents, and in this Church they first felt the power of the Gospel upon their hearts, and tasted the sweetness of that grace which brings salvation to man. Therefore, in the communion of this Church they earnestly desired to live and die.

"By this time a number of others who were generally esteemed eminent for gifts and piety, together with those who had already offered as candidates, became solemnly impressed to proclaim the Word of Life and Salvation to sinners. But alas! the door of admittance seemed to be shut against them.

"In this dark state of matters, both the ministers themselves, and likewise the candidates who had already offered, and others who were looking forward toward the ministry, together with all the societies in our bounds, began now, in good earnest, to realize the necessity of crying mightily to that God who has Church judicatures in his hands, as well as the hearts of individuals. In the meantime, candidates and

other eminent characters, who were assiduously endeavoring in one way or another to promote the work of God, were encouraged by their fathers in the ministry to continue the exercise of their gifts in a way of public exhortation, which several of them did, laboring much till the next Presbytery; at which time several petitions were presented, with hundreds of signatures, praying the Presbytery to license and send to their relief certain denominated persons. The subject was again taken into consideration, after which the Presbytery, who were personally acquainted with those men embraced in the petitions, knowing their piety, soundness in the faith, aptness to teach, etc., and taking into view the situation of the congregations, and the extraordinary demand for preaching, determined to hear trial sermons from three or four of them (at the present session), to be considered as popular discourses; which accordingly were delivered, and sustained by a large majority of the judicature. And after an examination on various subjects, touching the ministry, which was also sustained, they were 'licensed to preach the Gospel within the bounds of the Transylvania Presbytery, or wherever else, God in his providence, might call them.'

"Certain members who had always been opposed to the measure, entered their protest against the proceedings of the majority. But the majority were not deterred thereby from pursuing, in their official capacity, that method which they conscientiously believed best calculated to promote the Redeemer's kingdom in the world.

"The Synod, not long after this, divided the Transylvania Presbytery, and formed what was called the Cumberland Presbytery, the bounds of which included all the members that attended the preceding session of the Transylvania Presbytery. This act gave a decided majority, in the new Presbytery, to the promoters of the revival and those who were friendly to the licensure of the aforementioned young men, which majority ever after continued and increased until the Presbytery was dissolved.

"The licensing of these men, on the petition of the congregations, seemed to be a means, in God's hand, of increasing, instead of decreasing, the demand for supplies. They (the preachers) laboring both night and day, leaving their families for a considerable length of time, preaching the Word, planting new societies, and watering those that were planted, would necessarily increase such demand, if attended with the divine influence. And, brethren, we need only appeal to many of you to witness the success that evidently attended those men's labors. The feeling and experience of your own hearts are better evidences to you on that subject, than all the reasons that could be advanced. Though you may have ten thousand instructors, yet you have not many fathers in Christ.

"The Presbytery, in pursuing what they believed to be their duty, continued from time to time to license and ordain such men, both learned and unlearned (what is meant by unlearned here, is not a want of common English education), as they thought would be useful laborers in the vineyard of the Lord. And, if the old maxim be a good one, 'judge of causes by their effects,' the Presbytery will never have just cause to regret that they engaged in, and pursued, such measures: for it is an incontestable fact (judging by our Lord's rule, *by their fruits ye shall know them*), that there are multitudes of both men and women who will have cause to rejoice eternally that they ever heard those men preach a crucified Christ.

"The members who entered their protest sent a petition to the next session of Synod, referring them to the protest, 'which they thought should have operated as an appeal,' in which they complained of various irregularities in the Cumberland Presbytery with respect to the licensure and ordination of men to the ministry. The Synod at that time did or said but little about the matter; but at their succeeding session they appointed a commission of Synod to meet shortly

afterwards in the bounds of the Cumberland Presbytery, at Gasper River, and directed certain members of the Commission to cite, previously to that meeting, all our preachers, licentiates, candidates, and public exhorters,* who generally met in obedience to the citation.

"We would observe here, brethren, that although the appointment of the Commission was (we hope) well intended, yet we believe it was unhappily selected as to a part of it, from what appeared in the prosecution of their mission. A number of that body, however, both preachers and elders, were meek and friendly disposed men, who felt, as brethren, disposed to pursue the most pacific measures (according to their order from the stated Synod) to heal the breach that threatened the Church. But, on the contrary, it is notorious, that another part of that body were men of different tempers; and it was an unfortunate circumstance that those men were the most forward, influential members.

"After the Commission had met, and also the accused (who were then known as the majority of the Cumberland Presbytery), the Commission selected, from the minutes and other sources, a number of irregularities, as chargeable against the majority of the Presbytery, all of which, however, were comprised in the two following particulars, to wit: 1st. The licensing of unlearned men, or such as had not been examined on the learned languages, etc.; 2d. That those men who were licensed, both learned and unlearned, were required to adopt the Confession of Faith only partially, that is, as far as they believed it to agree with the Word of God.

"As to the first ground of complaint, the Presbytery not only pleaded the exception made in the discipline in extra-

* There was much noise about so many exhorters having been authorized by the Presbytery. The members thought, with the Apostle, that it was the duty and privilege of all Christians to exhort in some manner; and the design they had in licensing such as made application was to give them more weight among the people, without the most distant prospect of licensing them to preach, except those whose talents would have justified such an act.

ordinary cases, but also the example of a number of the Presbyteries in different parts of the United States.* They, moreover, appealed to a higher authority than either of the foregoing, which was the New Testament, and inquired if there was any precept or example, in that, which condemned the practice of licensing what they (the Commission) called unlearned men to preach the Gospel? It was likewise asked if God could not as easily call a Presbyterian to preach, who had not a liberal education, as he could a Methodist or Baptist? a number of whom are acknowledged to be respectable and useful ministers of Jesus Christ.

"As to the second point, the Synod had suggested that the candidates could have adopted the 'Alcoran' in the same manner they adopted the Confession of Faith. This was acknowledged to be literally true, but not applicable in the case of the young men; for the Presbytery contended that the very act of the candidates' receiving the Confession at all,

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* Among the many instances of this kind that might be mentioned are the following, to wit: Mr. Beck, who was received by the Presbytery in North Carolina; Mr. Bloodworth, by Orange; Mr. Moore, by Hanover; Mr. Marquis, by Redstone; and Mr. Kemper [the Rev. James Kemper, the first Presbyterian pastor in Cincinnati, Ohio, the first north of the Ohio River] and Mr. Abell, by the Transylvania Presbytery. Likewise in Pennsylvania, many years ago, a poor illiterate man, a native of Wales, conceiving that he had an internal call to preach the Gospel, made his case known to the Presbytery. But, because he was not sufficiently acquainted with the English language to undergo all parts of examination in it, or in any other but his mother tongue, the Presbytery, therefore, sent for Mr. Davis, who was also a native of Wales, to conduct the necessary examination previous to licensure.

In short, the majority of the Cumberland Presbytery were of opinion that the compilers of the Confession of Faith and Discipline of our Church never intended that the rules there laid down for examination and trial of candidates for the ministry should be considered an infallible standard by which the Holy Ghost must be limited when he calls men to that sacred office. They had no doubt that this reverend body, at the same time they laid down those prudential rules, believed that the Great Head of the Church could, and actually did, when he thought proper, bring men into the ministry without the aid of those literary qualifications. And if granted that he might in one instance, why not in more; yea, why not in many? Who will limit the Holy One of Israel?

was an evidence that they esteemed it above all other human creeds; and the exception, or condition, in which they were indulged, was only designed to meet some conscientious scruples, in points not fundamental or essential, particularly the idea of fatality, that seemed to some of them to be there taught, under the high and mysterious doctrine of predestination.

"The reasons offered by the Presbytery, on those points, did not appear satisfactory to the Commission of Synod; therefore, much altercation took place, during which time, no doubt, Christ was wounded in the house of his friends, by some (perhaps) of both judicatures. It is well recollected, at any rate, that the Presbytery, during the debate, were often reminded by certain members of the Commission that they stood at their (the Commission's) bar! Indeed, brethren, it appeared to us very notorious, that some of the leading members of that body assumed attitudes and an authority which but illy comported with the character of ministers of the meek and lowly Jesus, sent on a pacific mission.

"After much reasoning, as well as positive assertion on the subject, the Commission demanded of the Presbytery, to give up to them all those men whom they had licensed and ordained for re-examination. The Presbytery refused, suggesting the danger of the example, and also that such a demand was without precedent. They, moreover, declared that they believed the discipline of the Presbyterian Church had deposited the sole power in the several Presbyteries to judge of the faith and qualifications of their own candidates for the ministry.*

"After the refusal of the Presbytery, the Moderator of the Commission proceeded to adjure the young men to submit

* On the principles of the Commission's demand, no Presbytery would know when there was an addition made to their body by ordination, inasmuch as the next Synod might demand a re-examination of the newly ordained minister, judge him unqualified, and declare he should no longer preach as a Presbyterian.

to their authority and be re-examined, when one of them asked liberty for himself and brethren to retire and ask counsel of God, before they would give an answer. This reasonable request was, at first, strongly opposed by one or two leading members of the Commission! But at length it was granted, and the young men retired to ask counsel of Him who is all-wise. In a short time after they returned, when they were asked individually if they would submit, they all (except one or two, who wanted longer time to deliberate) answered in the negative, for the following reasons, to wit: First, They believed the Cumberland Presbytery, which was a regular Church judicature, to be competent judges of the faith and abilities of their own candidates. Secondly, That they themselves had not been charged with heresy and immorality; and if they had, the Presbytery would have been the proper judicature first to have called them to an account. Notwithstanding, the Commission of Synod proceeded formally to prohibit all the men, learned and unlearned, whom the Cumberland Presbytery had licensed and ordained, from preaching the Gospel in the name of Presbyterians! and also cited what were called the old members to attend the next stated session of Synod, to be examined on faith and to answer for not having given up their young brethren to be re-examined.

"Here, brethren, we would ask (knowing that a number of you have been thirty or forty years regular members of the Presbyterian Church) if ever you knew an instance, either in Europe or America, of a Synod's undertaking to prohibit preachers [from exercising their ministerial functions] who had not been accused by their own or any other Presbytery? We would also ask if ever you knew an instance of any reformed Church judicature's silencing a minister or ministers who had not been charged with heresy, immorality, or even what our discipline calls contumacy? This was certainly the case with the young men. That is, they were not charged with either of the above, yet they were prohibited,

and the Presbytery censured because they would not acknowledge the authority by which it was done.

The members of Presbytery then retired to consult as to what was best to be done (but not in a Presbyterial capacity), and after deliberation they agreed to encourage the young men to continue the exercise of their respective functions, which they themselves determined to do, except in such business as required the act of a Presbytery.

"Some months after, there was a general meeting, or Council, held at Shilo, consisting of the ministers, elders, and representatives from vacancies, which formerly composed a majority of Cumberland Presbytery. At that Council it was agreed on, to petition the General Assembly; and in the meantime cease our operations as a Presbytery; but continue to meet from time to time in the capacity of a Council, and promote the interests of the Church as well as we could, until an answer could be obtained from the Assembly. The Council, at this meeting, unanimously declared it to be their opinion that the Commission of Synod had acted contrary to Discipline, which opinion was corroborated by the next Assembly (though not officially), according to a private letter from a respectable member of that body, a part of which is as follows:

" 'The unhappy differences in your quarter, so immediately succeeding what a great proportion of the Presbyterian interest in this place believed to be a great revival of the work of God, has excited deep concern, and our General Assembly have had the matter fully before them. It appeared to be the decided opinion of the majority in the General Assembly, that no Synod has a right to proceed against ministers or individuals, except the matter shall have come before them by appeal from the Presbytery. That only a Presbytery could call its members to account for errors in doctrine or practice. That a man once ordained by a Presbytery is an ordained minister though the Presbytery may have acted

improperly in not requiring the due qualification; and that even a Presbytery could not afterwards depose but for cause arising or made public after ordination. That licentiates are always in the power of their Presbytery to examine them and to withdraw their licensure at discretion. But that a Synod may act against a Presbytery as such by dissolving, dividing, censuring, etc., consequently that the dealings with Cumberland Presbytery were legal in dissolving them and annexing them to Transylvania, but wholly improper in suspending ordained ministers, and still more improper was it for a Commission of Synod to do it. But though the rule about the knowledge of languages, in our discipline, is not often fully complied with, and though the rule is not found in the Scriptures, yet it is so important that, though your case was an imperious one, they seemed to fear you had gone too far, especially in the licensures. But what the General Assembly hath finally done will appear very inconclusive on these points; because they wished to avoid offending the Synod and the Presbytery; and the minority in the Assembly took advantage of this to make the business end as much as possible in such a manner as not to be construed against the power of Synods and General Assemblies. The General Assembly have, however, questioned the regularity of the proceedings of your Synod.'

"You may see, brethren, in the foregoing extracts, what was the decided opinion of what may be called the collected wisdom of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, on the points for which we contended. And perhaps, in examining the list of commissioners who composed the Assembly, the members will be found to stand as high for learning, integrity, and piety as a subsequent Assembly who differed with them in opinion. You will, moreover, see the reason why we were not profited by the favorable opinion of the Assembly. As to the Assembly's fearing we had 'gone too far in the licensures,' we will not pretend to say their fears were altogether without foundation. Nevertheless, the Presbytery

that have been without sin on this subject 'may cast the first stone.' That is, the Presbytery that have licensed as many as the Cumberland Presbytery have, and have licensed no improper person to preach the Gospel.*

"The Assembly addressed a letter to the Synod, informing them that what they had done 'was at least of questionable regularity,' and requested them to review their proceedings, and rectify what might have been done amiss. The Synod, we understood, reviewed, but confirmed, all that their Commission had done. The Council, notwithstanding, were encouraged to forward another petition, after which we were informed by a private letter from another influential member of the Assembly that it would be most proper for us to apply to the Synod to rescind their former order, as it respected the Presbytery; and if they refused, then for the Council to appeal to the Assembly, which 'no doubt would redress their grievances.' The official letter of that Assembly not having come to hand, the Council thought it prudent to postpone doing anything in it until such letter could be seen. After it was seen, a number of the members of Council thought the prospect of a redress of grievances not flattering; and at the next Council it was voted, by a large majority, to go into a constituted state, and in that capacity address the General Assembly. But by reason of the minority's refusing to acquiesce in what the majority had done, the Council did not still constitute a Presbytery. After some time some of those who were of the majority felt willing to comply with the recommendation of the member who wrote to us and told us to go up by appeal from the Synod, but, before there was an opportunity of doing so (after such conclusion), we heard, to our astonishment, that the Assembly had decided in favor of the Synod. This step at once superseded the necessity of an appeal; therefore, the Council, generally, thought it was

* The Cumberland Presbytery has reason to thank God that every man whom they licensed (except one individual) continues to believe, preach, and practice the Gospel of Christ.

now time to constitute into a Presbytery, and proceed to business again in that capacity. But some of the members wished to make the last effort with the Synod, who now had the business in their own hands and the whole agreed, at the Ridge Meeting House, in August last, to propose their last terms and forward them to the Transylvania Presbytery, or Synod, by two commissioners, to be appointed for that purpose, which was accordingly done; and the terms, in substance, were as follows:

" 'We the preachers belonging to the Council, both old and young, from a sincere desire to be in union with the general body of the Presbyterian Church, are willing to be examined on the tenets of our holy religion, by the Transylvania Presbytery, Synod, or a committee appointed for that purpose; taking along the idea, however, that we be received or rejected as a connected body; also that all our ministers, ordained and licentiates, retain their former authority, derived from the Cumberland Presbytery. It was, moreover, understood that if the Synod should require the preachers to re-adopt the Confession of Faith it should be with the exception of fatality only.' Our commissioners were directed to go, and take a copy of the above minute, without any discretionary power whatsoever to alter the propositions in any way. And it was unanimously agreed and determined that, if the Synod would not accede to the propositions, on the fourth Tuesday in October ensuing they (the whole Council) would go into a constituted state. The commissioners accordingly went to the Synod; and, after their return, informed us that the Synod would not consider our case, as a body, but as individuals. Neither would they suffer any of our preachers to make the exception to the Confession of Faith. The commissioners, notwithstanding, obtained an order for an intermediate Presbytery 'to be held at Green Town, to consider the case of Mr. Hodge and others.' Here, brethren, we will insert for your information the minute of

the last Council, and also the preamble to the minute of our first Presbytery.

" 'The Council met at Shilo, agreeably to adjournment, on the fourth Tuesday in October, 1809. Whereupon Mr. King was appointed to the chair and Thos. Donald, Clerk. The Council opened by prayer.

" 'Enquiry was made what progress the commissioners had made at the Transylvania Presbytery (or Synod) towards bringing about a reconciliation, and how those judicatures had treated the propositions of the last Council. Mr. Hodge, after some preliminary remarks (in which he suggested that he thought the commissioners had obtained a compliance with the substance of the Council's propositions), read a copy of a petition he had presented to the Synod and the Synod's order on that petition. After the matter was discussed, and after the minute of the last Council on that subject was read, and compared with the petition, and order above, the vote was taken, whether or not the Synod had complied with the propositions of the Council, which was decided in the negative by a very large majority. The vote was then taken whether or not the Council would put the resolution of last Council into execution (which went solemnly to declare that unless the Synod acceded to their propositions they would on this day constitute into a Presbytery), which was carried in the affirmative by a large majority, after which Messrs. William and Samuel Hodge, ministers, and Thomas Donald, elder, withdrew from the Council, virtually declaring their intention to join the Transylvania Presbytery. There being then only three ordained ministers present, it was inquired whether they were now ready to go into a constituted state; when it was found that one of them was embarrassed in his mind. The Council then adjourned and met again, waiting the decision of that member, who at length declared he could not feel free at the present time to constitute. The Council then, together with all the licentiates and candidates pres-

ent, formed into a committee and entered upon a free conversation on the subject before them; when it was finally agreed to, that each ordained minister, licentiate, elder, and representative shall continue in union, and use their influence to keep the societies in union, until the third Tuesday in March next, and then meet at the Ridge Meeting House; 'after which each one shall be at liberty from this bond, unless previously to that time three ordained ministers belonging to this body shall have constituted a Presbytery; then, in that case, the committee will consider the bond of union perpetual; which Presbytery, after doing such business as they may think proper, are to adjourn, to meet at the Ridge Meeting House, the said third Tuesday in March, in a Presbyterial capacity.'

'SAMUEL KING, *Chairman.*'

"Thus, brethren, we have, in the integrity of our hearts, endeavored to give you as correct and impartial an account of the rise and progress of the cause, or causes, that have brought us into our present situation, as justice to ourselves and our best recollection would admit. We have not intentionally and unjustly exposed or covered the conduct of any man or judicature. We have only aimed at giving a clear, honest view of the matter, that you might be enabled to judge for yourselves whether we have acted with propriety or impropriety. If we be in an error we are not conscious of it.

"We think, brethren, precipitancy or rashness cannot be justly imputed to us in the present case. We have waited, in an unorganized state, for more than four years, and in that time have repeatedly prayed the judicatures to redress our grievances; and have not contended for one privilege but what we conscientiously believe God's Word allows us. If we had sought or desired an occasion to make a schism in the Church, we had an excellent pretext, after the unprecedented conduct of the Commission of Synod towards us. But in-

stead of this we voluntarily suspended our operations as a Presbytery, and waited from year to year (being beset on every side) hoping the matter might be settled on principles just and equitable. We said, 'beset on every side.' Yes, brethren, a number of you know that various sectaries took the advantage of our forbearance and peculiar situation and endeavored to rend our flourishing congregations. The swarms of heretics and fanatics also who came down from the upper counties of Kentucky gave us much perplexity. Yet we determined through grace to stand firm, and continue to appeal to the reason and justice of the higher judicatures, until we were assured they were not disposed to restore our rights. This assurance we have at length obtained; and there was no alternative left us, but either to violate our solemn vows to our brethren,—act contrary to our reason and conscience,—or form ourselves into a Presbytery separate from the Kentucky Synod. This step, at first view, may alarm some of you. But be assured, brethren, that, although we are not now united to the Presbyterian Church by the external bond of discipline, we feel as much union in heart as formerly, and we would further assure you that we have not set up as a party inimical to the general Presbyterian Church; no, we ourselves are Presbyterians and expect ever to remain such, whether united to the general body or not.

"Permit us, further, to inform you what we do know to be an incontestable fact. That is, there are a number of ministers who are kept in the bosom of the Presbyterian Church, who have deviated infinitely more from the Confession than we have done. One can boldly deny the imputation of Christ's active obedience to the sinner, in justification, and publish it to the world; another can deny the operation of the Holy Spirit, in the work of regeneration,* and yet we,

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* See Mr. Davis' publication, in South Carolina, and Mr. Craighead's, of Tennessee.

who only object to the unqualified idea of eternal reprobation, cannot be indulged in that objection!

"It has been said that if all the ministers belonging to the Council had continued together, and had constituted into a Presbytery, it would have been much better. Brethren, if individuals, for reasons best known to themselves and their God, have thought proper to change a position in which we thought God had blessed them, we have not yet felt at liberty to do likewise. We have to account to God and our own consciences, as to how we have acted in this matter.

"Some have feared because of the smallness of our number. Brethren, we have yet left, in the bounds of our Presbytery, almost as many ministers, exclusive of candidates, as our blessed Lord chose to spread the Gospel through the world. And whilst we acknowledge the greatest inferiority to those twelve champions of the Gospel, yet we profess to believe that neither the standing nor reputation of a people depends on their numbers. If this were admitted, the Roman Church, when it was at its zenith of superstition and idolatry, would have been the most prominent and respectable in the world. But the Reformation and subsequent events have taught us that was not the case with it. But, notwithstanding, some individuals have changed their ground; yet, as far as we have learned, but very few of the numerous and respectable societies or congregations have abandoned us; and many individuals of those few were partly constrained to do as they have done from their local situation.

"Some of you are afraid you cannot be supplied by the Presbytery. Brethren, the same Almighty Lord of the harvest who heard your prayers on that subject ten years ago, is willing to hear again. Is the harvest indeed great and the laborers few? well, then pray the Lord to send more laborers.

"Some fear lest the Presbytery should take too much liberty in licensing and ordaining unlearned men. If by this you mean you are afraid the Presbytery (in some instances)

will dispense with the dead languages, your fears are well grounded. But if you are afraid we will license and ordain men without a good English education, we hope your fears are without foundation. And while we thus candidly declare our intention to receive men as candidates those without a knowledge of the languages, who are men of good talents, and who appear to be evidently called of God (believing, as we do, that there are thousands in the Presbyterian Church of such description, who would make more able and respectable, and more useful ministers of Jesus Christ than many who say they have been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel), we would nevertheless recommend it to all parents who have sons who promise fair for the ministry, to have them taught the Greek language, especially the Greek Testament. Some of us, brethren, intend to do ourselves what we here recommend, and thereby more fully convince you of our sincerity.

"We would just add, that we have it in view as a Presbytery to continue or make another proposition to the Synod of Kentucky or some other Synod for a re-union.* If we can obtain it without violating our natural and scriptural rights it will meet the most ardent wish of our hearts. If we cannot, we hope to be enabled to commit ourselves and our cause to Him who is able to keep us. Brethren, if we live at the feet of the Redeemer and feel constant dependence on Him, we are not afraid but that He will be our God and director. And if God be for us who can be against us? We therefore entreat you, brethren, to watch and be sober.

"Cultivate friendship with all societies of Christians who maintain the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, and whose

* In The Circular Letter the Presbytery announced its purpose to seek "a re-union" with the Synod of Kentucky, but shortly after the Letter was issued, the Presbytery of Transylvania was divided into three Presbyteries, Muhlenburg and West Tennessee being cut off from Transylvania. In view of the geographical location it was more natural to seek a union with one or the other of these two new Presbyteries. Moves were made in this direction, but without success.—J. V. S.

lives comport with their profession. But avoid the multitude of deceivers who have gone out into the world and strike at the root of all real religion. Avoid them, we entreat you, as you would the open enemies of the Cross of Christ.

"Gird on the whole armour of God. Fight the good fight of faith, live in peace, and the God of peace shall be with you. Amen.

SAMUEL M'ADOW, *Moderator.*

"Test:—YOUNG EWING, *Clerk.*"

At a meeting of the Presbytery on April 7, 1813, "By motion, Messrs. Finis Ewing and Robert Donnell are appointed a Committee to draft a complete, though succinct, account of the rise, doctrines, etc., of the Cumberland Presbytery." At a meeting on October 6, 1813, "The Committee appointed by the last General Cumberland Presbytery, for that purpose, reported to the Synod [constituted the day before] a succinct account of the rise, doctrines, and progress of the Cumberland Presbyterians, which was approved and ordered to be printed in third edition of Buck's *Theological Dictionary.*"

Buck's Theological Dictionary

"PRESBYTERIANS Cumberland, this is a body of Presbyterians who principally reside in the states of Kentucky and Tennessee, and in the adjacent territories. They constituted a Presbytery separate from the Kentucky Synod and General Presbyterian Church, on the 4th of February, 1810. The causes that led to this are as follows:

"About the year 1799 or 1800, God revived religion in a remarkable manner in the western country, through the instrumentality of some Presbyterian preachers; consequently many new congregations were soon formed and organized. But to continue to supply them all, by the *then* licensed and ordained ministers, was impracticable.

"A venerable father in the ministry [the Rev. David Rice] who came from a distance, discovering the necessity for supplies, proposed to the preachers who were engaged in promoting the revival to choose from among the laity some men (whose talents, piety, &c. would justify such a step), and encourage them to prepare for the work of the ministry, though they might not have a classical education. This proposition was readily acceded to, and several persons were spoken to on the subject, and encouraged to improve their talent by exhortation, and to prepare written discourses to exhibit to the next Transylvania Presbytery, as specimens of their abilities to sermonize, &c.; with which they accordingly complied. The discourses were read to the aged member who first recommended the measure, and tolerably well approved. They were not now received as candidates for the ministry, but were directed to prepare other discourses to be read to the next Presbytery, where the debate became very animated, whether they should be admitted as candidates for the holy ministry; when finally a majority of one vote decided one of them only should be received at *that* time. The next Presbytery, however, decided by a large majority in favor of the proposed plan; and accordingly, after hearing popular trials, &c. proceeded to license three men, to wit:— Alexander Anderson, Finis Ewing and Samuel King to preach the gospel as probationers. These men although two of them had no knowledge of the dead languages yet from their discourses, ex tempore, as well as written, and from petitions of hundreds of serious Christians, praying that they might be licensed; the Presbytery thought they could not be out of their duty in promoting them to the work of the ministry; in which opinion they were afterwards fully confirmed. Some members of this Presbytery, however, as well as the preceding, were opposed to the measure, who entered their protest, and wrote to the Synod, who, at first, paid but little attention to it. About this time the Transylvania Presbytery was divided, and the *former* Cumberland Presbytery con-

stituted, in which there were always a decided majority in favor of licensing men to preach the gospel (when need required, and God called) who were 'apt to teach,' and sound in the faith, though they might not possess a liberal education. Therefore, from time to time they licensed (some of whom they ordained) men of that description. This measure was still opposed by that part of the Presbytery who were unfriendly to the revival. The Synod took the matter, and appointed a Commission of their own body to meet in the bounds of the Cumberland Presbytery, and directed the members thereof, with all their licentiates, candidates, and exhorters to meet, which summons the greater part of them obeyed.

"After the Commission and the accused had met, the former exhibited many charges against the latter; principally taken from the minutes of the Presbytery and public fame: all of which were chiefly comprised in the two following, to wit:—1st. Licensing men to preach who had not been examined on the languages. 2d. That those men who were licensed, both learned and less learned, had been only required to adopt the Confession of Faith partially, that is, as far as they believed it to agree with God's word.

"As to the first ground of complaint, the Presbytery not only plead the exceptions in the discipline, in 'extraordinary cases,' but also the example of a number of Presbyteries in different parts of the United States. They moreover, appealed to a higher authority than either of the foregoing, which was the *New Testament,* and inquired if there be any precept or example in that Book which condemns the practice of licensing what they (the Commission) called unlearned men. It was also asked, if God could not as easily call a *Presbyterian* not classically learned, to preach the gospel, as he could such of any other denomination?

"With respect to doctrines, the Presbytery believed their candidates had departed from no *essential* doctrine taught

in the Confession of Faith; and therefore ought to have been indulged in their conscientious scruples about tenets not *essential* or important. This reasoning, however, was not satisfactory to the Commission, who demanded all the young men to be given up to them for re-examination. The Presbytery refused; viewing the demand unprecedented, and *directly* making dangerous encroachments on the liberties and privileges of Presbyteries, who according to the discipline, were sole judges of the faith and qualifications of their own candidates for the ministry. The young men then being summoned to submit, and refusing, the Commission proceeded solemnly to prohibit them all, learned and less learned, from preaching or administering any more as Presbyterians; and summoned the majority of the Presbytery to appear at their next Synod, to answer for not surrendering their young brethren, and to be examined themselves on doctrines. The Presbytery thought it a very extraordinary step indeed, for a Commission of Synod to silence, or prohibit, a number of respectable and useful ministers of Jesus, without *process* or trial, men, whose moral characters were unexceptionable, and who had never been called before their own Presbytery to answer any charge; and men, who were never convicted of either *heresy, immorality,* or *contumacy,* before any judicature whatsoever. The Presbytery being conscious that the Commission had acted illegally, determined to petition the General Assembly. In the meantime they formed themselves into a Council; intending, with their young brethren to promote religion as well as they could in that capacity; refraining from presbyterial acts, until they could learn the decision of the Assembly: the first decision of which appeared favourable. This encouraged the Council to expect the Assembly would eventually redress their grievances. They therefore waited and petitioned, until they were convinced by an act, or decision of the Assembly, that the Synod were justified in their unconstitutional and unprecedented conduct toward the young preachers: which

(after another fruitless application to the Synod and Transylvania Presbytery) determined three of the remaining ordained ministers to constitute a separate Presbytery; which was done in the following manner:" (Here follows THE COVENANT printed on a preceding page.) Then the article continues as follows:

"*Doctrines.* It has been already observed that the Presbyterian Confession is their Confession, 'except the idea of fatality.' But as some may think this too indefinite, it may be proper here to state explicitly all the essential doctrines or tenets they hold.

"1st. That Adam was made upright, pure and *free;* that he was necessarily under the moral law, which binds all intelligences; and having transgressed it, he was consequently, with all his posterity, exposed to eternal punishment and misery.

"2d. That Christ the second Adam represented just as many as the first, consequently made an atonement for all, 'which will be testified in due time.' But that the benefit of that atonement will be only received by the true believer.

"3d. That all Adam's family are totally depraved, 'conceived in sin; going astray from the womb, and all children of wrath;' therefore must 'be born again,' justified and sanctified, or they never can enter into the kingdom of God.

"4th. That justification is by faith alone as the Instrument; by the merits of Christ's active and passive obedience, as the *meritorious* cause; and by the operation of God's Spirit, as the *efficient,* or active cause.

"5th. That as the sinner is justified on the account of Christ's righteousness being imputed or accounted to him; on the same account he will be enabled to go on from one degree of grace to another, in a progressive life of sanctification, until he is fit to be gathered into the garner of God, who will certainly take to glory every man who has been

really justified: that is, he, Christ, has become wisdom, (light to convince) righteousness, (to justify) sanctification, (to cleanse) and redemption, (to glorify) to every truly regenerated soul.

"6th. That there are three persons in one God, coequal, essential, and eternal; or the Father, Word, and Holy Ghost: that the Mediator is very God and very man; two distinct natures in one person; therefore while the humanity obeys and suffers, there is infinite worth or merit given to that obedience and suffering, by the union of the divinity.

"They dissent from the Confesion—in, 1st. That there are no *eternal* reprobates.—2d. That Christ died not for a *part only,* but for all mankind.—3d. That all infants, dying in infancy are saved through Christ, and sanctification of the Spirit.—4th. That the Spirit of God operates on the *world,* or as coextensively as Christ has made the atonement, in such a manner as to leave all men inexcusable.

"As to the doctrines of predestination and election, they think, (with many eminent and modest divines who have written on the subject) they are mysterious and they are not well pleased with the application that rigid Calvinists, or Arminians make of them. They think the truth, or *that,* as well as many other points in divinity, lies between the opposite extremes. They are confident, however, that those doctrines should not, on the one hand be so construed as to make any thing the creature has done, or *can* do, at all meritorious in his salvation; or to lay any ground to say 'well done I;' or to take the least degree of the honor of our justification and perseverance from God's unmerited grace, and Christ's pure righteousness. On the other hand, they are equally confident those doctrines should not be so construed as to make God the author of sin, directly or indirectly; either of Adam's sin, or any subsequent sin of his fallen race; or to contradict the express and repeated declaration of God's word, on the extent of the atonement and

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operations of the Spirit; or to contradict the sincerity of God's expostulations with sinners, and make his oath to have no meaning, when he swears he has no pleasure in their death; or to resolve the whole character of the Deity into his sovereignty, without a due regard to all other of his adorable attributes. Finally, they think those doctrines ought to be thought and spoken of in a consistency with God's moral government, which always has for its object the happiness of his intelligent creatures, when it consists with his justice and the honor of the divine throne.

"*Discipline.* Their discipline is Presbyterian. Their congregations are governed by church sessions, Presbyteries, and they now [1813] have appointed to constitute a Synod to be called the Cumberland Synod. They are tenacious of the presbyterial form of church government; because they believe it to be equitable, just and scriptural; and because it tends to cherish in their minds, and the minds of their congregations a love of civil, as well as religious liberty; its being so congenial to the republican form of government established in these United States; which stands equally aloof from monarchy and anarchy.

"On the subject of their deviation from the old rule with respect to literary qualifications for the ministry, they would not be understood as undervaluing that precious handmaid to the useful work of a gospel minister. They have in two publications called 'A Circular Letter,' and 'A Reply,' given abundant evidence of their anxiety to acquire and promote useful knowledge by recommending the study of the Greek Scriptures, and by their exertion to procure a circulating library of theological, historical, and scientific books, which they are increasing from time to time. Notwithstanding they are persuaded that God has and does call many to preach the gospel, who have no knowledge of the original languages, and who have been and are eminently useful in their profession. They have therefore dispensed with *that* condition,

as not being *absolutely* necessary; yet they recommend it, when it can conveniently be acquired. From pursuing this course they have, as might be expected, some learned and some *less* learned preachers of the everlasting gospel; the latter of whom appear in many instances, to be as useful in promoting the word of God as the former." (Charles Buck's *Theological Dictionary*.)

Buck's *Theological Dictionary* was a representative publication, issued in London and Philadelphia. The above article on the Cumberland Presbyterians appeared in the edition of 1814, and in subsequent editions.

The Church Name

The origin of the word "Cumberland," in America, has already been indicated. It has been shown how the word came to be applied to a group of mountains, then to a gap in these mountains, then to a river, and finally to that geographical section, known as the "Cumberland Country." As stated, the Presbytery of Transylvania embraced this part of the country, from the date of its organization, 1786 to 1802, when "the lower portion" was cut off to form the Presbytery of Cumberland, taking its name from the "Cumberland Country," in which it was located. This first Presbytery of Cumberland was dissolved in 1806.

The second, or Independent Presbytery of Cumberland was constituted in 1810. It was out of this Presbytery that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church originated. When this Presbytery was organized it was not the purpose of its founders to start a new Church, but to afford spiritual oversight for more than sixty small centers of worship on the frontier. Dr. McDonnold says: "When the [Cumberland Presbyterian] Church was organized in 1810, it adopted no denominational name. There was no intention then of starting a new Church. It was an Independent Presbytery

of Presbyterians, which still hoped for restoration to its old status in the Mother Church. The people called its adherents Cumberland Presbyterians. It was not till 1813 that the new Church indirectly adopted the name which the people had already given." This was in the adoption of "The Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the United States of America." It was on the title page of this book that the new organization was first referred to as a "Church."

Chapter VI

CREEDAL STATEMENTS

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in 1814, affirmed that the "grounds" of the "separation" of the Cumberland Presbyterians from "us were, that we would not relax our discipline, and surrender some important doctrines of our Confession of Faith." The Assembly specified two "grounds," namely, *Discipline* and *Doctrine,* leading to the "separation." It will be observed that nothing was said about the educational standard. However much this subject may have been emphasized in earlier years it was passed over in silence by the Assembly in 1814.

The Assembly was correct in naming *Discipline* and *Doctrine* as "grounds" of "separation." As noted, there were two parties in the Presbytery of Cumberland, the Revival Party and the Anti-Revival Party. The latter was the minority party, and not being pleased with the action of the majority party in selecting some men as catechists and exhorters to meet what that party regarded as a pressing need, some of the members of the minority party made a statement to the Synod of Kentucky. In response the Synod appointed a *"Commission vested with full Synodical powers* to confer with the members of Cumberland Presbytery and *to adjudicate* upon Their presbyterial proceedings," etc. The majority party contended that the appointment of such a Commission with such powers delegated to it was unconstitutional. The Synod, however, as has been seen, supported the findings of the Commission, which, as Dr. Cossitt says, demanded "submission, nothing less than unqualified submission" in all cases. Here was the ground of Discipline to which the Assembly referred. See pages 49 and 50.

Except "Fatality"

The second ground of "separation" named by the Assembly was that of *Doctrine.* The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church accepted the Westminster Confession of Faith, "except the idea of fatality," which seemed to them to be taught under the "high mystery of predestination," Confession of Faith, Chapter III. This exception they believed they could make under an enactment of the Synod of Philadelphia, in 1729, when it was the Supreme Judicatory of the Church. This enactment, in part, reads as follows: "And we do also agree, that all the Presbyteries within our bounds shall always take care not to admit any candidate of the ministry into the exercise of the sacred function but what declares his agreement in opinion with all essential and necessary articles of said Confession, either by subscribing the said Confession of Faith and Catechisms, or by a verbal declaration of their assent thereto, as such minister or candidate shall think best. And in case any minister of this Synod, or candidate for the ministry, shall have any scruple with respect to any article or articles of said Confession or Catechisms, he shall at the time of his making said declaration declare his sentiments to the Presbytery or Synod, who shall, notwithstanding, admit him to the exercise within our bounds, and to ministerial communion, if the Synod or Presbytery shall judge his scruple or mistake to be only about articles not essential and necessary in doctrine, worship, or government." (Records of the Presbyterian Church, p. 94.)

The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, as they said, believed that they "had departed from no *essential* doctrine taught in the Confession of Faith; and therefore ought to have been indulged in their conscientious scruples about tenets not *essential* or important." This reasoning, however, was not satisfactory to the Commission or to the Synod, notwithstanding the enactment of the Supreme Ju-

dicatory of the Church in 1729, which had never been repealed.

Reservations?

There were doubtless cases in which candidates for licensure and ordination made reservations in their adoption of the Confession of Faith. One case, that of Barton W. Stone, is mentioned in this connection. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Transylvania on October 4, 1798. The presbyterial record, as might be expected, is silent on his reservation, the Presbytery probably holding with Mr. Stone that the reservation was not *essential,* as per the enactment of 1729. Instances of this kind may have happened more frequently than one might suppose. Mr. Stone's experience is related in his Biography, pages 29 and 30, as follows:

"In the fall of 1798, a call from the united congregations of Cane Ridge and Concord was presented me, through the Presbytery of Transylvania. I accepted; and a day not far ahead was appointed for my ordination. Knowing that at my ordination I should be required to adopt the Confession of Faith, as the system of doctrines taught in the Bible, I determined to give it a careful examination once more. This was to me almost the beginning of sorrows. I stumbled at the doctrine of Trinity as taught in the Confession; I labored to believe it, but could not conscientiously subscribe to it. Doubts, too, arose in my mind on the doctrines of election, reprobation, and predestination, as there taught. I had before this time learned from my superiors the way of divesting those doctrines of their hard, repulsive features, and admitted them as true, yet unfathomable mysteries. Viewing them as such, I let them alone in my public discourses, and confined myself to the practical part of religion, and to subjects within my depth. But in re-examining these doctrines, I found the covering put over them could not hide them from a discern-

ing eye with close inspection. Indeed, I saw they were necessary to the system without any covering.

"In this state of mind, the day appointed for my ordination found me. I had determined to tell the Presbytery honestly the state of my mind, and to request them to defer my ordination until I should be better informed and settled. The Presbytery came together, and a large congregation attended. Before its constitution, I took aside the two pillars of it, Doct. James Blythe and Robert Marshall, and made known to them my difficulties, and that I had determined to decline ordination at that time. They labored, but in vain, to remove my difficulties and objections. They asked me how far I was willing to receive the confession. I told them, as far as I saw it consistent with the word of God. They concluded that was sufficient. I went into Presbytery, and when the question was proposed, 'Do you receive and adopt the Confession of Faith, as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Bible?' I answered aloud, so that the whole congregation might hear, 'I do, as far as I see it consistent with the word of God.' No objection being made, I was ordained."

"A Reply"

In April, 1812, the Presbytery of West Tennessee released "A Pastoral Letter" in which irritating language was used. The Rev. Finis Ewing, shortly after, made "A Reply." The Independent Presbytery of Cumberland adopted it as "a just exposition of our [their] exception to the Confession of Faith upon the term fatality, and also a just view of the system of doctrines held by this Presbytery as fairly deduced from the Confession of Faith, so far as doctrines are treated of in that Reply."

Two brief excerpts indicate the nature of the Reply "upon the term fatality." Mr. Ewing wrote: "The Cumberland Presbytery, in their Circular letter, expressed their objections

[to the Confession of Faith] modestly. They said, except the idea of fatality that seems to be taught, &c. They did not wish to make an attack on that instrument, which they believed contained all the essential doctrines of Christianity; and which in the main was their own Confession of Faith. But the objection, however modestly expressed, has been sounded from West Tennessee to Philadelphia, and from thence has been re-echoed to Tennessee again. I shall therefore attempt to show that there is fatality in the Confession of Faith, at any rate according to the sense in which we use the term. I think it unnecessary to make many remarks about the word, considered abstractly, because every man has a right to show what meaning he designs to convey when he uses certain words to convey ideas—words are arbitary; but I cannot help believing that the word *fatality* does strictly and properly convey the idea we designed it should—some of our best standards explain it as meaning 'a predetermined order or series of things and events, a decree of fate,' or in one word necessity. In this last sense, which is the highest, I understand it, and the Presbytery of Cumberland do also. When the [Westminster] Confession of Faith was adopted as the bond of our union with this exception, the chairman, in full Council, explained what we understood by the word *fatality,* which was to apply to that part of the Confession only, which in effect denies the atonement to be universal, or that Christ tasted death for every man. That we excepted to that part of the Confession which prohibits us from making a free, unreserved, sincere and consistent offer of salvation to every one of Adam's family who had lost his day of grace. This is the way the chairman and the whole Council understood the word, when they selected it as a proper term to show their objection to the [Westminster] Confession of Faith. And according to this sense, is there no fatality in the Confession? According to the common definition of the word we have given above is there no fatality in the Confession? Let us see if we cannot point it out. Confession of Faith,

Chapter III, Sections 3 and 4, 'By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.' Etc., etc. Is not this fatality?

The second excerpt deals with "elect infants." "But again," wrote Mr. Ewing, "in chapter X, Section 3, 'elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit.' Elect infants imply non-elect infants. Who are the non-elect? Those for whom Christ did not die, or the reprobate infants." The controversy over "elect infants" has given the defenders of the Westminster Confession of Faith a great deal of trouble. This was true on the frontiers in these early days, and it has been true in later days. The Rev. Dr. Henry J. Van Dyke, Moderator of the General Assembly in 1902, writing on "Ought the Confession of Faith to be Revised?" said, that the phrase "elect infants" "is quoted and understood by thousands within and without the Presbyterian Church, not only as tolerating, but as teaching by implication that some dying infants are lost, in fulfillment of a supralapsarian decree." As late as 1902, the Rev. Dr. John DeWitt, a prominent minister, and theological seminary professor, in the Presbyterian Church, thought "it unwise to erect into a church doctrine our belief that all who die in infancy are saved."

Confession of Faith

The new Presbytery grew very rapidly, so that it became necessary to divide the Presbytery into three Presbyteries, and constitute a Synod. The Synod held its first meeting on October 5, 1813. At this meeting a Committee, consisting of William McGee, Robert Donnell, Thomas Calhoun and Finis

Ewing, was appointed to prepare a Confession of Faith, Catechism and Discipline "for the distinct Society of the Cumberland Presbyterians." The Committee reported on April 5, 1814, its report was adopted, and published.

A note addressed "to the Christian Reader," in the form of a preface, reads as follows: "The Synod, in the execution of the following work, have only exercised a right which they think every association, or body of Christians are entitled to by the Great Head of the Church, as well as by the laws of the land. If the reader wishes to know the occurrences that gave rise to this state of things, he is referred to The Circular Letter of the late Cumberland Presbytery [On the organization of the Synod, which took the name of Cumberland, the name of the Presbytery of Cumberland was changed to that of Nashville]; to a Series of Letters, commonly called 'A Reply;' to a Pastoral Letter of West Tennessee Presbytery; and to the 3d [American] edition of Buck's Theological Dictionary, printed in Philadelphia, under the letter P. It will be seen that the Synod have followed the plan of the Westminster Divines in their Confession, Shorter Catechism, and Directory. In the Discipline they have necessarily made some considerable alterations: not in the general plan of Church Government (which they deem the best extant), but in literary qualifications, etc.

"With respect to the Confession, it will be seen the Synod have adopted many whole chapters of the old almost verbatim: In others they have retained part and expunged part, sometimes adding a section, to make the sense more full and more compatible with their idea of the gospel. They have endeavored to erase from the old Confession the idea of fatality *only,* which has long appeared to them to be taught in part of that book. But notwithstanding the Synod have ventured to model, to expunge and to add to the Confession of the general Presbyterian Church, yet they are free to declare that

they think in the main, that to be an admirable work, especially to be performed so shortly after Roman superstition and idolatry had almost covered the whole Christian world. The Synod feel the greatest veneration for the compilers of that work; yet they think with those most estimable men, that 'all Synods or Councils may err, and many have erred;' therefore they think it not presumptuous, nor arrogant, to adopt what they think right, and expunge what they think erroneous from any human creed. In conformity to this principle they wish this work to be examined; that is let it be tried, not by former Confessions, but by the infallible word of truth. If it speak not according to the Bible, let it be rejected; but if it does, let it not be condemned because it does not agreed with all the fathers.

"The Synod have been prompted by a desire to do good in presenting this Confession and Discipline to the churches under their care, and to the world. If it should be a means in God's hand of promoting the Kingdom of the Redeemer, it will meet the highest object the Synod had in view."

Writing of this Confession of Faith, in 1907, the Rev. Dr. R. A. Webb, a leading theologian in the Presbyterian Church, U. S., says that "in 1813, the Cumberland Presbyterians revised the Westminster Confession of Faith . . . and for the first time in its history, the 'elect infant' clause was changed as follows: '*All* infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit,' " etc.

The rapid growth of the Church called for the organization of a General Assembly. The first meeting of this body was held in May, 1829. Then such changes as were necessary were made in the Form of Government and Discipline to adapt them to the change in the judicatories.

In 1882 a proposed revision of the Confession of Faith and Government having been approved by the General As-

sembly was transmitted to the Presbyteries for their action. The result was a remarkable concurrence on the part of the Presbyteries. The Assembly in 1883 declared that "the Confession of Faith and Government of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had been constitutionally changed."

Chapter VII

TWO GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church were guided by two principles. One, that of adaptation of the standard of ministerial education to the needs of a frontier country, raising the standard as rapidly as cultural advancement would permit; the other, that of a modified Calvinism. Both of these subjects were occasions of bitter controversy at the opening of last century, and later. Are we far enough removed from those controversial days to reach an impartial conclusion as to the soundness of these two principles? Whatever may be our own individual opinions, the experiences of other Churches and the opinions of historians afford grounds for comparison and consideration.

Adaptation

In 1869 an overture was presented to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern), asking it "to adopt some plan whereby Presbyteries may be authorized to license as lay preachers or exhorters such person as may be found qualified in mind and heart to instruct and edify the churches, without requiring of them that course of literary and theological education which is required for the regular ministry," etc. Answering, the Assembly "expresses its approbation of Presbyteries' granting permission to persons of suitable gifts, to hold meetings and speak the word of exhortation in churches, in their respective bounds, with the consent of the sessions, where such exist, and also in destitute neighborhoods; such persons being required to abstain from assuming the proper functions of the ministry, and being held subject to the control of Presbytery." (Alexander's

Digest.) "The action of the Assembly in 1869, authorizing the appointment of exhorters" was repealed in 1879.

In 1872 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America instructed its Board of Publication to select for its colportage work "such persons as may also be suitable for Sabbath school missionaries, and instruct them to establish Sabbath schools in destitute localities, under the supervision of the Presbyteries." In 1882 the Assembly further instructed the Board in reference to the work of the colporteurs that "the main emphasis is to be laid upon the work of religious visitation, and Sabbath school work expected from them among the spiritually destitute." This is what Dr. Bacon calls "a 'minor order' of ministers under the title of colporteurs," but which he says "was timidly and tardily" instituted. In 1893, the Presbyteries concurring, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., enacted a law enabling Presbyteries to license local evangelists. It was possible under the law for a local evangelist to enter the ministry, and many did so. Home missions in the great West on a large scale had created a demand for workers, which could not be supplied by the regular ministry. The words of Dr. Davidson about the needs of Kentucky in 1800 were applicapable then in the great West, "the demand for preaching soon exceeded the ability of ordained ministers to supply it," even with all the ordained missionaries the Board could send out. The need was partially met by the use of local evangelists. The law was not repealed until 1931, even then 72 Presbyteries, still feeling the need for this provision, voted against its repeal.

If the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. found it necessary to enact a provision for the licensure of exhorters as late as 1869, in an old settled country; and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. found it necessary to establish "a 'minor order' of ministers" as late as 1872, and to enact the local evangelist law as late as 1893, who can doubt the necessity

confronting the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the adaptation of ministerial education to the needs in a frontier country? Here the words of Dr. Bacon are to the point: "The argument for a learned ministry is doubtless a weighty one; but it does not suffice to prove that when college-bred men are not to be had it is better that the people have no minister at all."

Comparative Growth

In this connection it is of interest to note the growth in these years of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, in that part of the country in which the latter had its origin. According to the United States census for the year 1900, in Tennessee, the latter had more members than the other two together. Going a bit afield the same was true in Texas, while in Kentucky the latter was stronger than the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. and almost as strong as the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. The latter was stronger than either of the others in Missouri and in Arkansas. All this was true notwithstanding the fact that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was largely a rural Church, and its membership much limited in means. In these early days the Church lost heavily by the removal of members to cities. The loss became much greater as the tide of population from the country to the city became so pronounced.

Presbyterian Historians

Presbyterian historians have an interesting story to tell in this connection. Dr. Gillett says: "Among such a people [on the frontier], the recluse scholar, with his logical, polished discourse read from the manuscript, was not needed. Erudition and refinement were not in demand. The hardy backwoodsman required a new type of preacher,—one who could

shoulder axe and musket with his congregation, preach in his shirt-sleeves and take the stump for a pulpit. Men of this stamp could not be manufactured to order in colleges. They must of necessity be trained up on the field. They were for the most part thus trained—many of them after their arrival in the region; but it was wise and necessary that they should not despise learning."

The Rev. Dr. R. E. Thompson, another Presbyterian historian, writes: "A second difficulty in the Church's way was the rigidity of her polity in the matter of ministerial education. She was right in setting up a high ideal, and has benefited all the Churches of America by this. She was wrong in refusing to recognize that there are times when a higher expediency demands a temporary relaxation of the rule. It was a just requirement for a fairly educated and fully intelligent community, which enjoyed the prosperity and leisure of a country not newly settled. On the frontier, however, and among those who were enduring hardships and privations of a new settlement, with but few opportunities or even the simplest education, the rigid exaction of a college education for every candidate for the ministry was a fatal embarrassment." "The General Assembly," he continues, "judged of the needs of the frontiers by the standard of Philadelphia, and insisted (the people said) on 'making men gentlemen before it made them ministers.' It thus left its natural adherents to the more adaptable ministrations of the Methodists and Baptists."

At the close of the Revolutionary War the Presbyterian Church was not surpassed by any denomination in its opportunities for rapid growth, and ability to keep pace with the development of the nation. No Church exerted a greater influence in achieving our national independence. It possessed many advantages over its Baptist and Methodist competitors, especially among the Scotch and Scotch-Irish elements, which were so large a part of the population in

Kentucky and Tennessee. The struggle in the Cumberland Country on the part of the revival party, was an attempt at adaptation to the pioneer life in a wilderness country. Had the Presbyterian Church, instead of trying to maintain the "standard of Philadelphia" on the frontier, adapted itself in educational requirements, and evangelism, to the new situation, it would to-day beyond doubt be the largest Protestant body in the United States.

"Had the Church," says Dr. Thompson, "been able to maintain this position in the nation's religious life, and had it even been able to retain in its membership the children of the great Ulster immigration and to continue to assimilate the New England overflow, it would now take rank, not as the third, but as the first of the great Protestant communions of America. The ranks of the Baptists and Methodists, of the Episcopalians and the Disciples, have been swollen at its expense. Of the descendants of the Ulster Presbyterians in America probably not much above a third are to-day Presbyterian. However large the membership and extensive the influence of the Church, therefore, it cannot be called successful even in holding its own, much less in aggressive power."

The Skirmish Line

Dr. Bacon accounts for the failure of the Presbyterian Church to keep pace with the growth of the country, in the following paragraph: "The Presbyterians were heavily cumbered for advance work by traditions and rules which they were rigidly reluctant to yield or bend, even when the reason for the rule was superseded by higher reasons. The argument for a learned ministry is doubtless a weighty one; but it does not suffice to prove that when college-bred men are not to be had it is better that the people have no minister at all. There is virtue in the rule of ministerial parity; but it should not be allowed to hinder the Church from employ-

ing in humbler spiritual functions men who fall below the prescribed standard. This the Church in course of time, discovered, and instituted a 'minor order' of ministers, under the title of colporteurs. But it was timidly and tardily done, and therefore ineffectively. The Presbyterians lost their place in the skirmish line." Dr. Cossitt, who had a wide acquaintance in the Cumberland Country, expressed the opinion that the rigidity of church leaders in Kentucky lost to the Presbyterian Church thousands "whose multiplied descendants are the ornaments and supporters of other denominations, would, as they ardently desired, have lived and died in the Presbyterian Church." The Rev. Dr. Robert Hastings, a Presbyterian historian, says: "There can be no doubt that the Presbyterian Church missed a great opportunity when in the face of this great demand for the gospel it refused to let men preach unless they were college graduates."

Dr. Sweet, in his recent book, "Religion on the American Frontier Vol. II, the Presbyterians," says that "no Church in America at the close of the War for Independence, was in better position for immediate expansion than was the Presbyterian." He amplifies this statement as follows: "The Presbyterians had the best chance at this time of becoming the greatest of all American Churches both in point of numbers and influence. For we know that those Churches which were destined to become the most influential bodies in America were those which most successfully followed population westward, and which most adequately ministered to the religious and cultured needs of the West. At this early period the Presbyterians, most certainly, were in the best position to meet both these requirements. Already their Presbyteries, their churches and their ministers were to be found farthest west, and their leaders were imbued with the sturdy spirit of the pioneers."

In another connection, he says: "The relative slowness with which Presbyterians proceeded to form frontier churches is

well illustrated in the account of what took place in southwestern Pennsylvania, and helps explain why Presbyterians failed to take full advantage of their frontier opportunities. For ten years, from 1766 to 1776, regularly assigned Presbyterian ministers labored in this region before a single congregation was fully formed or a regular ministry established. The deliberation of Presbyterian procedure in this respect may well be contrasted with the usual rapidity with which church and circuit organization went forward among frontier Baptists and Methodists."

A Modified Calvinism

The second guiding principle of the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was that of a modified Calvinism. What has history to say with reference to this?

In 1824 there appeared a publication bearing the title: "A Brief History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the Proceedings of the Synod of Kentucky, relative to the late Cumberland Presbytery, in which is brought to view a brief account of the origin and present standing of the people usually denominated Cumberland Presbyterians; as taken from official documents and facts in possession of Synod. Published by order of the Synod at their sessions held in Harrodsburg, October, 1822."

On page 26 of this pamphlet, the Synod of Kentucky makes a statement as follows: "It is moreover due to the cause of truth and candor, as well as to our Church at large, and the public generally, to correct a statement, or solemnly disavow the truth of a statement, widely circulated in the account given of the Cumberland Presbyterians in 'Buck's Theological Dictionary.' (Fifth Edition, by W. W. Woodward, p. 419.) It is there stated, that the 'Commission exhibited many charges, &c:—1st. Licensing men to preach the gospel who had not been examined on the languages. 2d. That those men who were licensed, both learned and less

learned, had been only required to adopt the Confession partially, that is, as far as they believed it to agree with the word of God.' *This latter charge is true, but the former is not.* [Author's italics.] And for the truth of this disavowal, we appeal to the testimony of those members of the Commission of Synod who are yet living. We appeal to the records of the Commission where no such charge can be found specified or tabled against the Presbytery on that occasion. We appeal to the fact of the Transylvania Presbytery's having subsequently, under the connivance and approbation of the Synod, received two of those young men alluded to in the statement in question. And we appeal to the expressions of the Synod, in their explanation and defence to the General Assembly already given, which says: 'Further, Synod thought that among so many young men there might be found at least a few, who would shortly qualify for the gospel ministry, could they be induced to use the proper means. It is therefore denied that the charge [the educational standard] under consideration is true." The official records, referred to by the Synod, may be found in this treatise, Chapter III, "Extraordinary Cases."

Twelve years after the organization of the new Cumberland Presbytery, the Synod of Kentucky of the Presbyterian Church clearly affirmed that the principal cause leading to the organization of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was that of doctrine. This affirmation was made after the lapse of years, when excitement had given place to calm reflection, and must be accepted as the Synod's final judgment. The founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church were standing for a modified type of Calvinism, which the Presbyterian Church then was not willing to concede.

The Synod of Kentucky in its "Brief History," etc., refers to "the fact of Transylvania Presbytery's having subsequently, under the connivance and approbation of the Synod, received two of those young men," etc. This fact calls for a more elaborate statement.

Nelson and Hodge

Here it will be of interest to record the course of two men who returned to the Presbyterian fold, and to note in that connection the official record of the Presbytery of Transylvania. Thomas Nelson and Samuel Hodge were licensed and ordained by the Presbytery of Cumberland. They refused to acknowledge the authority of the synodical Council, and were prohibited by the Synod from "exhorting, preaching and administering ordinances in consequence of any authority which they have obtained from the Cumberland Presbytery, until they submit to our [the Synod's] jurisdiction, and undergo the requisite examination." After the course of the Commission and of the Synod had been confirmed by the Assembly in 1809, these men on December 7, 1809, made application to the Presbytery of Transylvania, under whose jurisdiction they were after the dissolution of the Presbytery of Cumberland, for the removal of the prohibition imposed on them three years before.

Dr. Sweet prints the record of the action of the Presbytery on their application. It follows: "On account of their situation from that of ordinary candidates pby. thought it unnecessary to record the parts of trial & being satisfied with Messrs. Nelson and Hodge in their doctrinal qualifications for the gospel ministry, their aptness to teach, & after their accepting the Confession of Faith & discipline of our church & promising in a solemn manner conformity to the rules & regulations of the church & submission to the brethren in the Lord, their licensure & ordination were recognized unanimously & they authorized to exercise all the functions of the gospel ministry agreeably to the rules of this pby. & invited to take their seats which they did accordingly." These men were deficient, one very much so, in educational qualifications. The Presbytery of Transylvania being judge, the ground of separation was one of *doctrine* and not one of *education*.

Presbyterian, U. S.

In 1867 a Joint Committee from the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern) and the Cumberland Presbyterian Church met and discussed terms for organic union. On the subject of ministerial education the Committee of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. expressed the sentiment that *"there is no difference between us; that whatever may have been the views and policy of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in that early day, and under the exigencies of the times, the sentiment of the Church is now unanimous as to the necessity of an educated ministry, in the sense in which our Standards make it obligatory."* [Author's italics.] (Alexander's Digest.) The question of ministerial education did not prevent an organic union between these two Churches.

On the matter of *doctrine,* the Cumberland Presbyterian Committee proposed that the Cumberland Presbyterian Confession of Faith be adopted as the Confession of Faith of the united Church, or that the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. be adopted, modified on "those points which pertain to the subject of fore-ordination, and cognate doctrines," or to make "a new compilation upon the Westminster Standards," which "shall exclude all phraseology and modes of expression which can plausibly be construed to favor the idea of fatality or necessity." This proposition was rejected.

The Committee from the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. reported to that body. The report was referred to a Special Committee which regarded "the present period as one very unfavorable for making changes in our standards of faith and practice." (Alexander's Digest.) The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. was unwilling to make any modification in its doctrinal statement as contained in the Westminster Confession of Faith, so the matter of an organic union between the two Churches was dropped.

The Reformed Churches

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church waited patiently for some indication of a modified Calvinism. In 1875 a number of Presbyterian Churches joined in the formation of the Alliance of the Reformed Churches throughout the World holding the Presbyterian System. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church was invited to take part in this organization, but for some reason failed to send delegates to that meeting. Delegates were sent to the third Council, meeting at Belfast, Ireland, in 1884. The General Assembly sent a communication to the Council in which special attention was drawn to the fact that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had revised the Westminster Confession of Faith, closing with these words: "Now, dear brethren, if the difference between our statements of doctrine and those in the Westminster Confession of Faith is inconsistent with our being represented in your body, you will so decide." Some of the ultra Calvinists raised an objection to their admission, on doctrinal grounds. Among the leading objectors was the Rev. Dr. J. M. Martin, Georgetown, Kentucky, a delegate from the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. The objection precipitated a lengthy discussion, which shed some light on the types of Calvinism represented in the Council.

The Rev. Dr. John Hall, pastor of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York, among other statements said: "Bear in mind that the good men, the sincere men, the earnest men, and the honest men, who were used by God in laying the foundation of this Cumberland Presbyterian Church believed—and whether they were right or not is not the question now—they believed themselves to be teaching the truth against what they supposed, rightly or wrongly, to be what we would now call hyper-Calvinism." (Proceedings, p. 150.)

The Rev. Dr. Henry Calderwood, Edinburgh, Scotland, said: "As I have read the history of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, it seems to have sprung up in a season of revival from opposition to a hyper-Calvinistic form of teaching, which many brethren and I myself, could not follow or adopt, and which I should ask to be delivered from, if I were held responsible for it in the Church to which I belong. I do not hold the Necessitarian theory of the will advocated by Jonathan Edwards, and my devotion to the Westminster Confession is not affected by a rejection of Necessitarianism." (Proceedings, p. 147.)

The Rev. Dr. Jean Monod, Montauban, France, informed the Council "as a matter of fact, that the greater part of them [Continental Presbyterians] in France and Switzerland and probably Belgium, hold about the same tenets as the Cumberland brethren." Then he added: "If these are on account of their tenets, kept out of the Council, the Continental Presbyterians would very probably not feel at liberty to remain in themselves. We are reformed Presbyterians. That does not mean that we adopt every part of Calvinistic doctrines. When Calvin framed his admirable doctrine of the grace of God in that shape, it was the necessity of the moment he had before him. This doctrine in a particular form was the true form for the 16th century—but God has not made us to live in the 16th century. Has not God led his Church, and are we not to be as true to his direction as we are true to the Bible, where we seek our doctrine? In a doctrine we find two parts, a fundamental and a historical part—the first permanent, the second modifiable. There is a Confession higher than the Westminster, and that is the Confession of the Bible." (Proceedings, p. 148.)

The Rev. Dr. R. Herbert Story, Rosneath, Scotland: "I commend in the highest what these brethren have done. It is a general and broad principle of liberty, that a Christian Church should revise its standards and reconsider its for-

mulas; and I welcome these brethren to our Alliance as having done, in the exercise of that liberty, that which I consider the highest prerogatives, and may become one of the most imperative duties, that any Christian Church can exercise. . . . I anticipate the time when all the Churches of this Alliance will have the grace and wisdom given to them to do what the Cumberland Presbyterians have done. . . . I am certain that there are many men here, and many men throughout the Churches which we represent, who have the heartiest sympathy with the direction in which the Cumberland Presbyterians have gone." (Proceedings, p. 154.)

The Rev. Dr. Edward D. Morris, Cincinnati, Ohio, "Living in the West," he said, "it has been my privilege to know something of the work and growth and fruitfulness of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. I desire to say that especially in the great South-west, this Church is recognized as one of the most efficient and useful among evangelical denominations. . . . I am prepared to say, as one who has for many years taught first Historical and then Dogmatical theology, that although inadequately Calvinistic, this revision [of their Confession of Faith] can not be regarded by any one as in any just sense, an Arminian document. There is too much Calvinism in it to justify any such affirmation. What the Cumberland Presbyterian Church has been trying to do, in all its revisions, is to eliminate from the Westminster Confession, not Calvinism proper, but what it regards as *fatalism,* embodied in the phraseology of our Symbols." (Proceedings, p. 158.)

After a lengthy discussion, the Council, very properly, without either approving or disapproving the revision of the Confession of Faith which the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had made, invited the delegates to take seats in the Council, which they did. It was the consensus of opinion that the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had eliminated

from its creed hyper-Calvinism, what it regarded as "fatalism."

The Rev. Dr. Edward D. Morris, quoted above, was one of the great leaders and scholars in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. He was Moderator of the General Assembly in 1875. In 1867 he was called to the Chair of Church History in The Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, and in 1874 he was transferred to the Chair of Theology, in which he served until 1897, rounding out thirty years in the Lane Faculty, the longest period ever served by any one in the Faculty. Next to the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher he rendered the most valuable service to Lane and next to Dr. Beecher he was the most versatile man ever connected with Lane. In his "Thirty Years in Lane," he states Lane's theological position, which represents a more liberal type of Calvinism than that which the founders of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church had to meet.

After a discussion of Presbyterianism in general and American Presbyterianism in particular, he says: "On this general basis, our Church is committed for the future to the widest liberty of thought consistent with denominational integrity, and to the cordial recognition of every true advance which free thought, under the guidance of the Spirit, may be led to make. We are not held movelessly, as if it were a spell, by the Calvinism of Calvin, or the Calvinism of the Turretins, or the Calvinism of the Synod of Dorth, or the Calvinism of Scotland, either past or present. We hold our Calvinism as Americans; counting ourselves at liberty to admit into it any modifying or improving influence that may flow from American life, and at liberty also to express it as we hold it, not in imported, but in American terms. In common with all true Presbyterians in all times, we place the Bible above our standards, and regard ourselves as bound first of all to study the Divine Word for ourselves, and then to believe what it teaches, just as God gives us grace to

apprehend it. And if, in his great love and under the impress of the amazing influences affecting us in such a land and age as ours, we are permitted to see the truth at any point more clearly and more comprehensively than our fathers in Britain or in Holland saw it two or three centuries ago, I trust that we have courage enough as a Church to welcome such revelations, and fidelity enough to the common Calvinism to express them. I am no advocate of loose thinking or loose language, in the sphere of belief: a Christian creed, born of the thought and struggle of centuries, is to me one of the most sacred things on earth. I am no friend of that reckless temper which would tear down the old before discovering any worthier substitute; there is a fancied progress which is downward toward iconoclasm in faith, and toward an ultimate extinction of faith. But while avoiding this hazardous extreme, we may still believe in healthful progress in theological opinion within our Church, and may look happily forward to advance upon advance in Calvinistic thought in our communion, even from century to century. Such, at least, is my personal hope and my constant expectation and prayer."

Dr. Morris wrote these words twenty years before the revision of the Confession of Faith in 1903. They are the words of a prophet as well as those of an able teacher and a clear-headed theologian. They represent the liberal spirit of Calvinism in which Lane was founded.

Revision and Union

The passing of the years brought progress. The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., in 1889, received overtures from fifteen Presbyteries "asking for some revision of the Confession of Faith." In response the Assembly said: "In the opinion of many of our ministers and people, some forms of statements in our Confession of Faith are liable to misunderstanding, and expose our system of

doctrine to unmerited criticism." The Assembly responded by sending down to the Presbyteries a proposed revision of the Confession of Faith, in 1890, for their approval or disapproval. But the proposed revision did not receive the approval of a sufficient number of Presbyteries, and consequently failed. This was at the time when the heresy charges against the Rev. Dr. Charles A. Briggs were being adjudicated. It was thought that this trial was one reason, probably the main reason, for the defeat of the revision.

The Church, however, did not permit the defeat to be permanent. In 1900 thirty-seven Presbyteries overtured the Assembly again on the subject. In 1902, the Assembly responded with a proposition to revise the Confession of Faith by the addition of Chapter xxxiv, "On the Holy Spirit," and Chapter xxxv, "On the Love of God and Missions," and "The Declaratory Statement" as to Chapter iii, and Chapter x, Section 3; also by the alteration of Chapter xvi, Section 7, Chapter xxii, Section 3, and Chapter xxv, Section 6. The Declaratory Statement reads as follows:

"While the ordination of ministers, ruling elders, and deacons, as set forth in the Form of Government, requires the reception and adoption of the Confession of Faith only as containing the System of Doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, nevertheless, seeing that the desire has been formally expressed for a disavowal by the Church of certain inferences drawn from statements in the Confession of Faith, and also for a declaration of certain aspects of revealed truth which appear at the present time to call for more explicit statement, therefore the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America does authoritatively declare as follows:

"*First.* With reference to Chapter III of the Confession of Faith: that concerning those who are saved in Christ, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine of His love for mankind, His gift of His Son to

be the propitiation for the sins of the world, and His readiness to bestow His saving grace on all who seek it. That concerning those who perish, the doctrine of God's eternal decree is held in harmony with the doctrine that God desires not the death of any sinner, but has provided in Christ a salvation sufficient for all, and freely offered in the gospel for all; that all men are responsible for their treatment of God's gracious offer; that His decree hinders no man from accepting that offer; and no man is condemned except on the ground of his sin.

"*Second.* With reference to Chapter X, Section III, of the Confession of Faith, that it is not to be regarded as teaching that any who die in infancy are lost. We believe that all dying in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases."

The statements in Chapter III and Chapter X, Section 3, of the Confession of Faith, the Assembly thought were "liable to misunderstanding," and exposed the "system of doctrine" of the Church "to unmerited criticism." Whether the "criticism" was "unmerited" or not, there is no doubt that there was an abundance of it. Such criticism was in evidence in the days of the founding of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, and before and after. It is true that church leaders insisted that it was a "misunderstanding" on the part of the critics, and that really the criticisms were "unmerited." Both individuals and church courts denied "certain inferences drawn from statements" in these Chapters, but that was merely an individual opinion against an individual opinion, or the opinion of a court with no more authority than a *court opinion,* which might be set aside by a later court opinion. In this revision the interpretations of these statements are not left to *opinion,* either individual or ecclesiastical. The General Assembly and the Presbyteries, under the law, by concurrent action, give an *authoritative interpreta-*

tion, which remains binding. The only way in which it can be changed is by a concurrent action of the Assembly and the Presbyteries, such as made it operative. When the Supreme Court of the United States interprets a document, that interpretation stands until it is repealed by the same authority; when the Assembly and the Presbyteries, by concurrent action, interpret statements in the Confession of Faith, such interpretations hold until changed by the same authoritative source.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., met in Los Angeles, California, in May, 1903. To this Assembly the reports of the Presbyteries on the revision were submitted. The Presbyteries had approved the proposed revision, and by the declaration of the General Assembly it then became operative. Of course, as a matter of fact the result of the presbyterial action was known before the Assembly met.

When the proposed revision was transmitted to the Presbyteries, leaders in the Cumberland Presbyterian Church expressed the opinion that if the proposed revision became law, the way would be open for a union of the two Churches. The General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church met in Nashville, Tennessee, on May 21, 1903, the same day on which the Presbyterian Assembly met in Los Angeles. On May 27, the Cumberland Presbyterian Assembly adopted two resolutions, as follows:

"*Resolved,* 1. That a Committee of Nine, on Presbyterian Fraternity and Union, be appointed by this Assembly to confer with such like Committees as may be appointed by other Presbyterian bodies in regard to the desirability and practicability of closer affiliations and organic union among the members of the Presbyterian family in the United States, and if, in any particular case, after conference and investigation, union shall seem to be desirable and practicable, to suggest suitable measures for its accomplishment, and to re-

port such basis of union as may be mutually agreed upon to the next General Assembly.

"*Resolved,* 2. That the foregoing resolution be reported immediately to the Presbyterian bodies now in session, and in due course to all other Presbyterian bodies."

These resolutions were transmitted to the General Assembly in Los Angeles. A prompt reply was received, reading as follows: "The General Assembly at Los Angeles received with cordial congratulations your message announcing appointment of a Committee on Presbyterian Fraternity and Union, and has appointed a similar Committee for the same purpose."

In due time the two Committees on Presbyterian Fraternity and Union met and prepared a basis of union for the two Churches, to be transmitted to their Presbyteries for their "approval or disapproval." The basis provided that "the union shall be effected on the doctrinal basis of the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as revised in 1903, and its other doctrinal and ecclesiastical Standards; and the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments shall be acknowledged as the inspired word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice."

Concurrent Declaration No. 1 reads: "In adopting the Confession of Faith of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, as revised in 1903, as a Basis of Union, it is mutually recognized that such agreement now exists between the systems of doctrine contained in the Confessions of Faith of the two Churches as to warrant this union—a union honoring alike to both. Mutual acknowledgment also is made of the teaching and defense of essential evangelical doctrine held in common by these Churches, and of the divine favor and blessing that have made this common faith and service effectual."

The Basis of Union was duly transmitted by the General Assemblies to their Presbyteries. Reports of the Presbyteries to the Assemblies in May, 1905, showed that the Union had been ratified by both Churches. Final action came in 1906, the Presbyterian General Assembly meeting at Des Moines, Iowa and the Cumberland Presbyterian at Decatur, Illinois. The latter on May 24, "adjourned *sine die,* as a separate Assembly, to meet in and as a part of the One Hundred and Nineteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, on the third Thursday of May, 1907, at eleven o'clock A. M., at the place chosen by the One Hundred and Eighteenth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, of 1906." So the identity and legal entity of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church was merged into and preserved in the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

The legality of this union was tested in State and Federal courts. Suits were brought in fifteen states, in twelve of which the cases were taken to the Supreme courts of these states. In the three states in which the cases were not appealed the decisions were in favor of the union. In Tennessee and Missouri at first decisions in the Supreme courts were unfavorable to the union, but the Missouri Supreme court immediately reversed itself. In Tennessee the last case was heard in the Supreme court in 1923. In this case the court "repudiated the binding effect of its previous decisions . . . as affecting future questions of denominational unions." In the other ten states the Supreme courts sustained the union on first hearings. In all the Federal courts, including the Supreme Court of the United States, in which cases were heard, the union was sustained.

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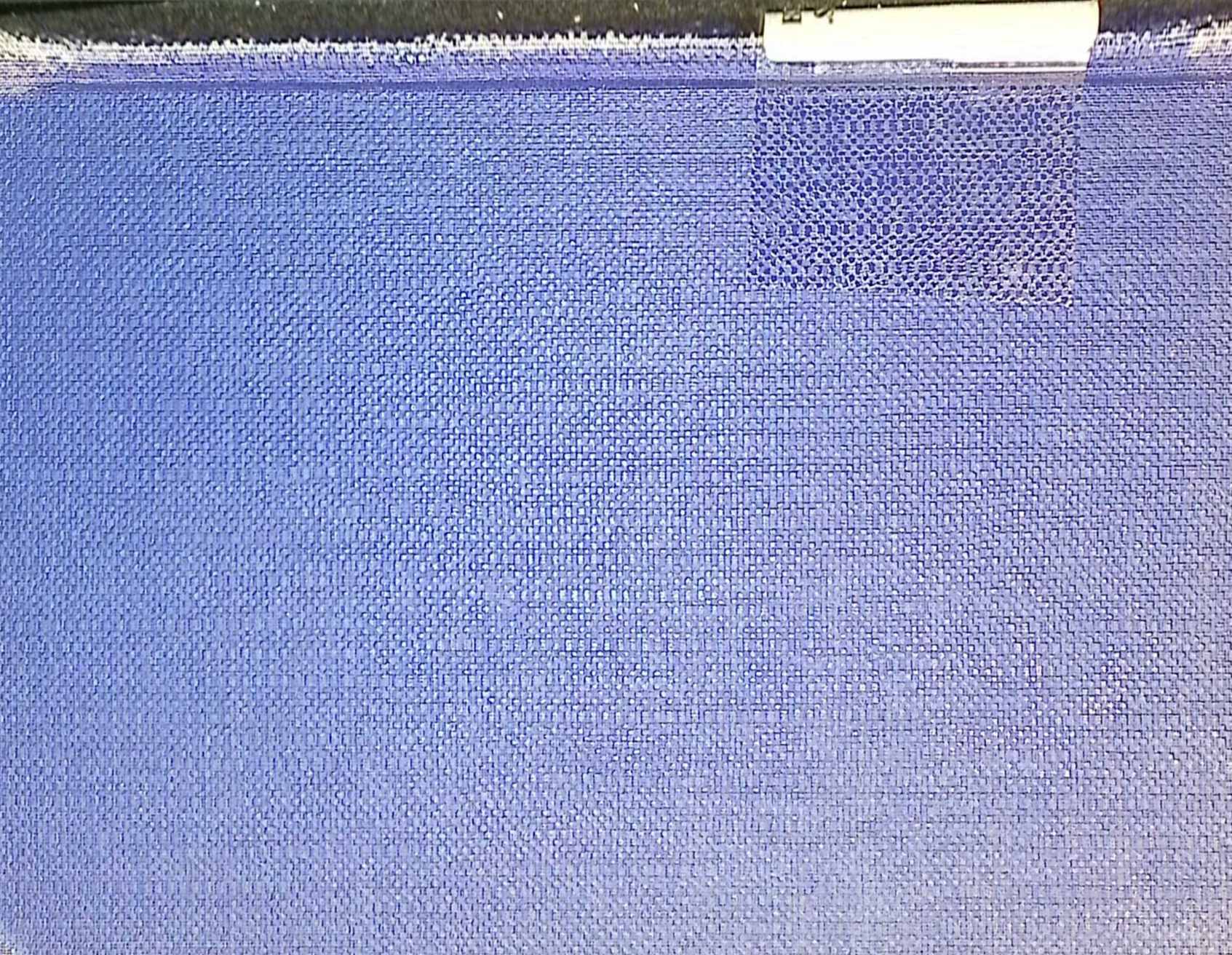
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